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What's it like to have a partner in the UK Armed Forces? Influences on the mental health and well-being of women

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What's it like to have a partner in the UK Armed Forces?

Influences on the mental health and well-being of women

Thesis submitted for the

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Psychological Medicine by:

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Abstract

Frequent relocations, disruptive separations and reunions, fragmented social support and the involvement of Service personnel in deployments are all major aspects of the military lifestyle. Despite the potential for these unique pressures to have negative influences on the mental health and well-being of spouses and partners (S/Ps) of Service personnel, there are few published studies on this population within the UK. This thesis uses both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to address the gaps in the literature by exploring the mental health and well-being of UK S/Ps.

Quantitative data from 405 UK S/Ps were used to estimate the prevalence of employment, mental health, alcohol use and marital satisfaction in this population. The qualitative study explored S/Ps experiences of employment, family and social networks during accompanied postings, their relationship with the military institution and the influences on well-being.

The findings suggested the mental health and well-being of S/Ps was poorer compared to women in the general population, with an increased prevalence of probable depression, hazardous alcohol consumption and a lower prevalence of relationship happiness. S/Ps described how accompanied postings restricted their sense of agency and challenged to their identity. The sense of connectedness women described with other S/Ps within the military community was described as mitigating some of these negative influences; however, women reported that such connections could be lost or weakened when they moved away from friends, other S/Ps and family, leading to isolation and disconnection.

The recommendations of these findings include the provision of additional support for S/Ps to alleviate the common childcare issues women described during accompanied postings. S/Ps and their family members should be made aware of the symptoms of probable depression and hazardous alcohol use among S/Ps to improve help-seeking and additional services provided. S/Ps and Service personnel may benefit from additional relationship support.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviation		Meaning
AFF	-	Army Families Federation, part-funders of this PhD studentship
APIM	-	Actor Partner Interdependence Model
AUDIT	-	Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test, measure of alcohol misuse
CFA	-	Confirmatory factor analysis
CFI	-	Comparative Fit Index, measure of SEM model fit
DAS-07	-	Dyadic Adjustment Scale 7, measure of relationship adjustment
ESRC	-	Economic and Social Research Council, part-funders of this PhD studentship
IMD	-	Indices of deprivation (quintiles of national deprivation)
IRR	-	Incidence rate ratios (negative binomial regression)
KCMHR	-	King's Centre for Military Health Research
LSOA	-	Lower layer super output areas
MO	-	Medical Officer
MP	-	Military personnel
NCO	-	Non-commissioned officer
NS-SEC	-	National Statistics Socio-Economic classifications
OR	-	Odds ratios (logistic regression)
PCL-C	-	Posttraumatic Checklist - Civilian Form, measure of probable PTSD
PHQ-9	-	Patient Health Questionnaire 9 items, measure of probable depression
PTSD	-	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RAF	-	Royal Air Force
RMSEA	-	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, measure of SEM model fit
RUC2011	-	Rural-Urban Definition for Small Area Geographies method 2011
S/Ps	-	Spouses/partners
SEM	-	Structural Equation Modelling
SFA	-	Service Family Living Accommodation
SOC	-	Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) of occupations
TLI	-	Tucker-Lewis Fit Index, measure of SEM model fit
WLSMV	-	Weighted least squares means and variance adjusted estimator

Glossary

Term		Meaning
Accompanied posting	-	Dependents (spouses, children) relocate along with Service personnel, generally living in Service Family Accommodation
Engagement type	-	Service personnel regular or reserve status
Ex-Service	-	Service personnel who have left Service
NCO	-	Enlisted Service personnel who have earned a commission by being promoted up through the ranks. Holds some degree of authority over lower ranked personnel. Includes corporal, sergeant, or petty officer ranks
Officer	-	Service personnel who obtain their commission directly into the officer grades following completion at military academy
Other ranks	-	Ranks below NCO such as Private in the Army
Regular personnel	-	Full-time Service personnel
Reserve personnel	-	Voluntary Service personnel who, following basic training, complete a specific number of training days per year at weekends or evenings
Service Family Living Accommodation (SFA)	-	Accommodation provided by the Armed Forces, the rent is usually subsidised
Serving status	-	Whether Service personnel are still in Service or have left
Super-garrison	-	A large garrison, or military base
Transition	-	The process of leaving Service and re-entering civilian society
Unaccompanied posting	-	Dependents (spouses, children) do not relocate along with Service personnel, living in their own or private accommodation

Statement of contribution

This thesis stems from a programme of research into the mental health and well-being of current and former Service personnel and their families within the King's Centre for Military Health Research (KCMHR) at King's College London. I conceived the initial idea for this thesis, applied for and received funding through the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) CASE PhD studentship programme and led its development throughout the entirety of the process. I designed and conducted the literature reviews and summarised the information arising from them, using the findings in the development of the quantitative and qualitative studies.

The quantitative component involves secondary data analyses of the Children of Military Fathers' study, which was developed and conducted prior to the commencement of this thesis. Therefore, I had no involvement in the development or collection of the quantitative data for this thesis from which participants were recruited. However, I performed data cleaning and management, derived deprivation and urban-rural variables from postcode data, designed the analytical strategies and conducted all analyses for data presented in this thesis. I designed and developed the qualitative study, prepared, submitted and obtained ethical approval, including all relevant documentation, recruited participants, conducted the interviews and analysed the data.

All work undertaken was conducted under the supervision of Professor Nicola Fear and Dr. Laura Goodwin, with additional supervision for the qualitative component provided by Dr. Sian Oram.

Statement of authorship

The writing, editing and drafting of this thesis was conducted by Rachael Gribble. Professor Nicola Fear and Dr. Laura Goodwin provided comments on all chapters and on the final draft. Dr. Sian Oram provided comments on the qualitative component of this thesis and the final draft.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Described as a 'greedy institution' (Segal 1986), the military demands dedication and commitment from Service personnel. However, the demands of the military are not just limited to Service personnel and the unique facets of military life that spouses and partners experience may hamper the mental health and well-being of women in a relationship with a member of the Armed Forces. Regular relocation, disruptive separations and reunions, fragmented social support, living primarily as a single parent and the involvement of Service personnel in deployments and combat are all common experiences for military families (Beevor 1990, Link and Palinkas 2013, Padden and Posey 2013). Such events can increase the stress and pressure on spouses and partners of Service personnel and result in poorer mental health and well-being among women who are married to or in a relationship with US Service personnel (Figley 1993, Wood, Scarville et al. 1995, Drummet, Coleman et al. 2003, Burrell, Adams et al. 2006a, Booth, Segal et al. 2007, Verdeli, Baily et al. 2011, Link and Palinkas 2013, Padden and Posey 2013).

Relocation is recognised as a stressful life event (Munton 1990, Moyle and Parkes 1999), yet this is a frequent occurrence in military life. 27% of UK spouses and partners stated they had relocated in the last 12 months for military reasons (Ministry of Defence 2015) and 54% of US spouses and partners stated relocation was one of the five most stressful experiences related to their military life (Blue Star Families 2015). Military relocation has been found to affect the employment, social networks, finances and family relationships of spouses and partners (Drummet, Coleman et al. 2003, Cooke and Speirs 2005, Burrell, Adams et al. 2006a, Ministry of Defence 2011, Runge, Waller et al. 2014, Blakely, Hennessy et al. 2014b). For spouses and partners of Service personnel, relocation is *tied,* as individuals move because of changes to their husbands' or partners' employment rather than necessarily by choice. The stress associated with tied relocation can be heightened among reluctant participants; for example, women in the US who move involuntarily report less control over their lives and lower levels of marital satisfaction than those who move voluntarily (Makowsky, Skinner Cook et al. 1988, Copeland and Norell 2002). Military relocation within country and overseas has been associated with poorer psychological and physical well-being and lower satisfaction with the Army among US spouses and partners (Burrell, Adams et al. 2006a). The latter is an important point for the Armed Forces, with potential impacts on retention. Australian spouses and partners in fulltime employment were significantly more likely to agree that they would encourage their partner to leave Service if he was relocated to an area they did not want to go to compared to spouses and partners with other employment outcomes (Atkins 2009). Despite the impact military relocation can have on the well-being of spouses and partners, much of the

recent qualitative research has focused on the influence of deployment on this population. A recent review of the literature in this area identified the need for further research on how relocation impacts on the mental health and well-being of spouses and partners (Blakely, Hennessy et al. 2012c). Within the UK, experiences of military relocation are common for spouses and partners. Service personnel change their job or are *posted* every 2-3 years, at which point they usually move with their family to another location (*accompanied posting*); postings can also be *unaccompanied*, where Service personnel relocate but family members do not (The British Army 2014).

In addition to the stressors and disruptions of military life, spouses and partners are also subject to the gendered nature of the military institution. The vast majority of both the US and UK Armed Forces consists of male Service personnel (ICF International 2014, Ministry of Defence 2016b), with women comprising the majority of spouses and partners. Within the military, spouses and partners of Service personnel become subject to the masculine and authoritarian nature of the military and actively embedded within its culture (Knobloch and Wehrman 2014). Spouses and partners are expected to take on unpaid roles performing emotional labour in the community for the ultimate benefit of the military, while the patriarchal and authoritarian control it wields over women allows spouses and partners to maintain only a peripheral connection to the institution they are supporting (Finch 1983, Harrison and Laliberte 1994, Enloe 2000, Harrell 2001). This labour extends to the family, with spouses and partners expected to provide stability for the family by performing almost all domestic and caring roles in order to allow Service personnel to focus on operational effectiveness (Harrison and Laliberte 1994). Although similar to the expectations experienced by women throughout society, the expectations on military spouses and partners are evident in military policy and procedures that position them as “dependants” despite their civilian status, supporting and perpetuating the gendered division of labour and power within the community by bonding women to their husband or partner through formal institutional processes (Weinstein and Mederer 1997, Enloe 2000, Horn 2010).

Such processes are an example of Papanek’s proposed ‘two-person single career’ theory, which postulates that the spouses and partners of men in certain occupations assume a role within their husband’s career through the informal and formal demands his employer makes of them (Papanek 1973). Such institutions have certain expectations of spouses and partners that aim to strengthen their commitment to the institution as well as employ the additional labour of women to conduct tasks and roles that ultimately benefit the institution itself. Through the expectations that women experience, they are drawn or *incorporated* into the

realms of the institution through the economic, social and emotional bonds to her husband or partner. Although dissipating in light of the changing role of women in the workforce, such gendered expectations are still evident within research on military spouses and partners (Durand 2000, Jervis 2011, Knobloch and Wehrman 2014, Enloe 2016). How women negotiate these anticipated roles, along with their own expectations of independence and agency may influence their mental health and well-being.

The published research suggests military life negatively impacts on the employment and mental health outcomes of women in a relationship with Service personnel (Cooke and Speirs 2005, Burrell, Adams et al. 2006a, Link and Palinkas 2013, Padden and Posey 2013). However, substantial gaps in the international literature have been identified, even with regards to the impacts of deployment on spouses and partners, with conflicting and incomplete findings (De Burgh, White et al. 2011). Within the UK, there has been little published research on spouses and partners, with the majority of published articles utilising predominately qualitative methodologies to explore spouses and partners experiences of deployment or overseas accompanied postings (Jolly 1987, Quinault 1992, Higate and Cameron 2004, Dandeker, French et al. 2006, Jervis 2011, Blakely, Hennessy et al. 2014b) or adopted a strongly feminist approach towards domestic violence and the militarisation of women (Gray 2016, Hyde 2016).

This thesis aims to address some of the gaps in the literature by examining the mental health and well-being of women in a relationship with a member of the UK Armed Forces using quantitative data. This is complemented by a qualitative study which aims to expand on some of the findings by exploring spouses' and partners' experiences during accompanied postings, their relationship with the military institution and how these influence their well-being.

From this point forward, spouses and partners will be abbreviated to 'S/Ps' for the sake of simplicity and expediency and in keeping with the wider literature. Military personnel will be referred to as Service personnel.

Thesis structure

Chapter 2 presents a summary of the results of literature reviews on relevant mental health and well-being outcomes among spouses and partners of Service personnel. The limitations of the existing evidence are discussed.

Chapter 3 outlines the rationale, theoretical approach and aims of this thesis.

Chapter 4-10 presents the quantitative methodology, prevalence estimates of employment, mental health and marital satisfaction among spouses and partners of UK Service personnel and socio-demographic and military factors associated with these outcomes. A summary of the main findings is presented for each chapter and for the quantitative study overall.

Chapter 11-13 presents the qualitative methodology and findings exploring how accompanied postings influence the well-being of spouses and partners of UK Service personnel. A summary of the main findings is presented for each chapter and for the qualitative study overall.

Chapter 14 is the main discussion for this thesis, linking the quantitative and qualitative findings and discussing them within the context of the wider literature and theoretical frameworks. Reference is made to articles published after the completion of the literature reviews. The strengths and limitations of the thesis are addressed, implications discussed and recommendations for future research made.

Chapter 2 – Literature review

This chapter reviews the relevant literature relating to the main objectives of this thesis. The purpose of this review was to inform and direct the thesis by providing a detailed background of the prevalence of mental health and well-being outcomes among spouses and partners. Due to the large and varied nature of the literature on spouses and partners (S/Ps) of Service personnel, this review focused on quantitative articles in four areas – employment, mental health (depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)), alcohol misuse and marital satisfaction – that were included in the quantitative study. These areas are also of key concern and interest for military families and Service charities.[1] A separate scoping review of articles of military relocation was conducted and is discussed later in this chapter.

Method

Literature reviews were conducted to determine the prevalence of, and factors associated with, employment, mental health (depression, PTSD), alcohol misuse and marital satisfaction among S/Ps. Where available, comparisons to women in the general population within articles were included.

Search strategy

Using a systematic approach, peer-reviewed health databases Medline, PsycINFO, PubMed and Web of Science were searched for articles related to employment, depression and PTSD and alcohol misuse among S/Ps. The review of marital satisfaction was conducted using Medline, PsycINFO and Web of Science, as well as databases with more of a social focus; Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA) and JStor. Grey literature resources of OpenGrey, RAND and Google Scholar and specialist journals Military Medicine and Armed Forces & Society were also searched, as were the reference lists of articles included in the reviews. Although conducted at different times, all searches were completed by March 2014.[2] Any relevant literature subsequent to this date was included in the discussion.

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[1] See Army Families Federation, Royal British Legion and Royal Air Force Family Federation information and campaigns on spouse and partner employment, mental health and family life www.aff.org.uk/army_family_life/health_additional_n/mental_health.htm, www.aff.org.uk/employmentcampaign.htm, www.rbli.co.uk/employment_solutions/lifeworks/107/, www.raf-ff.org.uk/family.asp

[2] The alcohol misuse review searches included articles up until the end of week 4 November 2013, the depression and PTSD searches included articles up until the end of week 1 January 2014 and the employment and relationship satisfaction search included articles up until the end of week 3 March 2014

Search terms related to military (e.g. “military”, “Armed Forces“, “veteran”) and wives (e.g. “spouse”, “wife”, “couple”, “intimate partner”) were combined with search terms for each specific area (see Appendix 1.1 for full search strategy) and matched against database keywords where possible. For example, the employment search used terms such as “employment”, “unemployment”, “occupation”, “labour force”, “career” and “working”.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Articles were eligible for inclusion if they were English-language, quantitative studies that provided estimates of, or examined factors associated with, employment, depression, PTSD, alcohol misuse or marital satisfaction among S/Ps. Quantitative studies were chosen as these outcomes were largely measured quantitatively in this thesis. If reported, comparisons with women in the general population were noted in order to estimate the effect of military life on S/P outcomes. To increase the number of articles included in the reviews, restrictions were not used regarding the means of estimating employment, alcohol misuse and marital satisfaction among S/Ps, with estimates from non-validated and validated measures reported. Only validated measures of depression and PTSD were considered to ensure clinically relevant findings were reported. No restrictions were applied according to sample size, population, country or response rate. Findings from international and UK family surveys were included where appropriate to provide additional data.

Articles were excluded if they were qualitative or did not report either prevalence estimates of outcomes among S/Ps or examine associated factors; dissertations and theses were not considered and were excluded although searches were made to see if the authors had published from relevant theses. As a result of the changing role of women in the labour force, employment articles were limited to those using data from the 1970s onwards to increase the applicability of findings to current S/Ps. Changes to mental health diagnoses over time meant the depression and PTSD reviews were limited to articles using data from the 1980s onwards to increase the applicability of findings to current S/Ps – however, this only applied to two articles from the 1970s. No date limitations were applied for the searches for articles regarding alcohol misuse or marital satisfaction. Flow diagrams of the articles included in each review are included in each section.

A summary of the main findings of each review is presented in the following order; employment, depression and PTSD, alcohol misuse and marital satisfaction. Within each section, tables are presented to aid discussion of the findings and provide additional information. Titles and full information for each article can be found in Appendix 1.2.

Availability of UK research

In all areas of this literature review, there was little published research on UK S/Ps. As a result, the majority of the research discussed in this literature review was based on international studies mainly from the US, with additional articles from Israel, Canada, the Netherlands and Australia. Findings from UK family surveys were included if they reported relevant results on S/Ps outcomes to provide data from a UK context.

Critique of articles

Although systematic methods of assessing study quality exist (CASP UK 2013), due to the number of topics and articles included in this review no formal appraisal of study quality was conducted. However, when discussing the limitations of the body of literature in each area and overall, references were made to similar criteria as used in critical literature appraisal; the selection of the samples and its representativeness of the wider population, study populations, study design, outcome measures, the measurement of the potentially associated factors or confounders and interpretation of the results. Limitations pertinent to the findings of individual articles were also made where appropriate.

Employment among spouses/partners

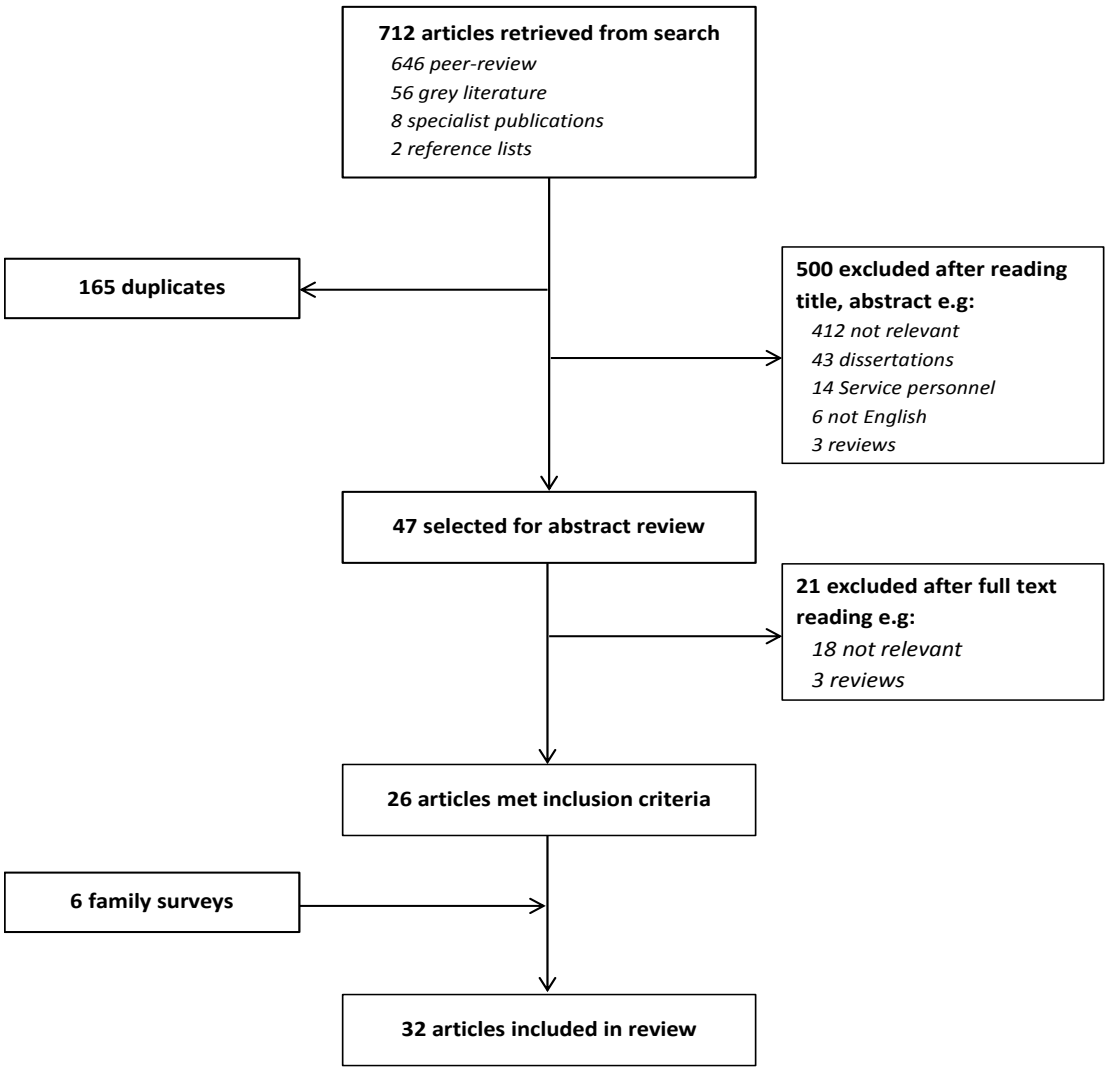
Search results

The S/P employment literature search returned 712 articles, 646 from peer-reviewed databases, 64 from the grey literature, eight from specialist publications and two from reference lists (Figure 1); 165 duplicates, 43 dissertations and six non-English articles were excluded. Of the remainder, 500 were excluded after reviewing the titles and abstracts. Forty-seven articles were included for full text screening, of which 26 estimated the prevalence of, or factors associated with, employment and were included in the final review. In addition, results from six US, Canadian and UK military family surveys were included to provide additional prevalence estimates. A total of 32 articles were included in the review.

Prevalence of S/P employment and comparisons with women in the general population

Two family surveys conducted by the Ministry of Defence provided data on employment and associated factors among UK S/Ps (Table 1). These surveys indicated that approximately 60% of UK S/Ps were in full-time or part-time employment (Ministry of Defence 2014a, Ministry of Defence 2014b). However, the response rate for one of these surveys was less than 30% and caution should be applied to interpreting the results.

Figure 1: S/P employment literature review flow diagram



Sixteen articles and family surveys provided estimates of the prevalence of employment amongst S/Ps in other countries (articles 7, 8, 10, 12, 18-21, 23, 25-28, 30-32, Table 1). The prevalence of full or part-time employment among US S/Ps ranged from 39% to 61% (Rosen, Ickovics et al. 1990, Schwartz, Wood et al. 1991, Stander, McClure et al. 1998, SteelFisher, Zaslavsky et al. 2008, Cooney, Segal et al. 2009, Lim and Schulker 2010, Miller, Meadows et al. 2011, Heaton and Krull 2012, Blue Star Families 2013, Blue Star Families 2014, Maury and Stone 2014, Military One Source 2014); earlier prevalence estimates were lower at 27% (Ickovics and Martin 1987). Estimates of S/Ps employment in other countries were noticeably higher; 65.4% for Canadian S/Ps (Dursun and Sudom 2009), 71.4% for Australian S/Ps (Atkins 2009) and 77% for Israeli S/Ps (Eran-Jona 2011).

Discrepancies between estimates of S/P employment between the US and other countries may be partially due to some results being presented as employed versus not employed, potentially masking the choices some women made not to be in employment. US articles that provided more detailed categorisations of employment outcomes based on whether S/Ps were seeking work or not indicated approximately 30-43% were not in the labour force (not working and not seeking employment) (Cooney, Segal et al. 2009, Lim and Schulker 2010, Military One Source 2014). This includes those who have opted to be stay at home parents (Stander, McClure et al. 1998).

Comparisons with women in the general population

Seven articles compared the prevalence of employment among S/Ps to women in the general population (articles 3, 6, 9, 22, 23, 29, 31, Table 1). Compared to women in the general population, fewer US S/Ps were employed and a greater proportion were unemployed, not in the labour force or underemployed (mismatch between educational achievement and qualifications required for job) (Schwartz, Wood et al. 1990, Lim and Schulker 2010, Heaton and Krull 2012). US S/Ps were less likely to work in a year, less likely to work fulltime and worked fewer weeks during the year than women married to civilians (Hosek and Wadsworth 2013). This gap appeared to be increasing, with an widening average difference in yearly unemployment rates between US S/Ps and women in the general population from 2000-2012 (Maury and Stone 2014). One article demonstrated that S/P employment had been increasing since the early 1970s and was on par with employment among women married to civilians (Grossman 1981) – this was later shown to be due to differences in employment according to S/P age, particularly given the lower prevalence of employment among women aged over 45 years (Hayghe 1986).

In countries where S/P employment was higher than the US, the evidence suggests the gap between women in the general population and S/Ps was much narrower. The prevalence of both employment (77.2% vs. 72.4%) and not being in the labour forces (21.5% vs. 18.6%) was similar between women married to civilians and Canadian S/Ps, although the significance between these differences was not stated (Dunn, Urban et al. 2010).

Socio-demographic and military factors associated with S/P employment

Twenty-four articles examined how S/P socio-demographic and Service personnel military characteristics, deployment and relocation affected S/P employment (articles 1, 2, 6, 7, 9-20, 22-26, 28, 31, 32, Table 1).

S/P socio-demographic characteristics

Two articles found employment was lower amongst older US S/Ps compared to younger women (Hayghe 1986, Military One Source 2014), although other articles found older US S/Ps worked more hours and were more likely to be in the labour market (Schwartz, Wood et al. 1990, Cooke and Speirs 2005). The average difference in yearly unemployment rates between US S/Ps and women in the general population decreased with increasing S/P age, suggesting that as S/Ps grow older, they were more able to return to work (Maury and Stone 2014), possibly as childcare and family responsibilities reduce. Higher education among S/Ps was generally associated with higher levels of employment (Schwartz, Wood et al. 1991, Harrell, Lim et al. 2004, Cooke and Speirs 2005, Cooney, Segal et al. 2009, Maury and Stone 2014, Military One Source 2014). The occupation S/Ps worked in was associated with employment, with a significantly probability of employment among S/Ps in higher managerial/professional, healthcare, teaching or retail professions (Schwartz, Wood et al. 1990).

The impact of domestic and caring responsibilities on the employment outcomes of S/Ps was evident in the reductions in working hours among studies of S/Ps with children. Compared to US S/Ps without children, S/Ps with children experienced a 21% decrease in the probability of working overall, a 15% decrease in the probability of working full-time and worked on average 12 weeks less per year (Hosek, Asch et al. 2002). S/Ps with children were significantly more likely to be unemployed or not be in the labour force and significantly less likely to be in involuntary part-time, full-time employment than those without children (Schwartz, Wood et al. 1990, Cooke and Speirs 2005, Cooney, Segal et al. 2009, Lim and Schulker 2010, Military One Source 2014). This effect was disproportionately higher for S/Ps of Army and Navy personnel than those connected to other Service branches (Harrell, Lim et al. 2004). The impact of children on women's employment appeared to be more pronounced among S/Ps than women in the general population, with significantly higher unemployment rates for S/Ps with an equal number of children under 18 years compared to women married to civilians (Maury and Stone 2014). The number of children was not associated with poorer S/P employment outcomes (Ickovics and Martin 1987) but the age of the youngest child was, with a significantly lower probability of employment for S/Ps with children younger than 5 years (Schwartz, Wood et al. 1991).

Military factors

Service personnel military characteristics

Compared to women in the general population and S/Ps of personnel in other Service branches, US Army and Marine S/Ps were less likely to be employed (Lim, Golinelli et al. 2007, Cooney, Segal et al. 2009, Military One Source 2014), with Army S/Ps the most likely to be seeking work (Harrell, Lim et al. 2004). Similar findings were reported among UK Army S/Ps, with fewer in full or part-time employment and higher unemployment compared with other Service branches (Ministry of Defence 2014a, Ministry of Defence 2014b). One study suggested Navy S/Ps were more likely to be in part-time work and less likely to be unemployed compared to Army S/Ps (Lim and Schulker 2010). Having a husband in the military was associated with a significantly lower probability of employment among women compared to women married to civilians (Schwartz, Wood et al. 1990).

S/Ps of lower ranked US Service personnel had higher levels of unemployment compared to S/Ps of officers (Schwartz, Wood et al. 1991, Military One Source 2014), a finding also seen among Israeli S/Ps (Eran-Jona 2011). For S/Ps of officers, the financial benefits of positions higher up the military hierarchy were suggested by the significantly higher percentage opting out of the labour force or voluntarily working part-time, with significantly fewer employed compared to S/Ps of other ranks (Cooney, Segal et al. 2009, Lim and Schulker 2010). This pattern of higher non-participation in the labour force among S/Ps of officers was seen in Canadian studies (Dunn, Urban et al. 2010). Other articles reported no or minimal differences in employment by rank among US and UK S/Ps (Cooke and Speirs 2005, Ministry of Defence 2014a). S/Ps of personnel who leave Service however may have improved employment outcomes after leaving the military community, with women married to veterans significantly more likely to be employed than those married to currently serving personnel (Maury and Stone 2014).

Military relocation

The employment and financial penalties S/Ps experienced as a result of military relocations were evident from the articles in the review. Relocation was endorsed as a frequent barrier to working by S/Ps, with negative effects on work opportunities and stability (Stander, McClure et al. 1998, Miller, Meadows et al. 2011, Blue Star Families 2013). The effect of relocations on S/P employment was universal; nearly 45% of Australian S/Ps endorsed that building a career following relocation was difficult or very difficult (Atkins 2009) and 25% of Canadian S/Ps endorsed challenges to finding employment after moving (Sudom 2010). More objective

measures of the impact of relocation found that US S/Ps who relocated in the past year were twice as likely to be unemployed as S/Ps who did not move, with unemployment increasing with the number of relocations experienced (Military One Source 2014); S/Ps who relocated in the previous five years experienced a 10% decrease in employment, a 9% increase in unemployment and a four hour decrease in hours worked per week compared to women who did not move (Cooke and Speirs 2005) and with a significantly lower probability of employment (Schwartz, Wood et al. 1990). The probability of S/P employment increased with months at location (Schwartz, Wood et al. 1991). No significant association between participation in the labour force and moving in the last year was found in one study (Lim and Schulker 2010).

Beyond the disruption caused by frequent military relocations, the locations military families move to can impact on S/P employment. Relocations between countries or provinces were associated with significantly higher unemployment, part-time work and not participating in the labour force for Canadian S/Ps due to restrictions on working or qualifications not being recognised (Dunn, Urban et al. 2010). Overseas locations were associated with lower employment (Lakhani 1994). Unemployment rates among US S/Ps were lower for S/Ps residing in large urban areas and higher for those residing in rural areas due to the greater number of opportunities (Harrell, Lim et al. 2004, Maury and Stone 2014). US S/Ps living on military facilities had lower levels of full-time employment than those living off base, suggesting proximity to the military community may impede spousal employment, although this was not adjusted for age (Miller, Meadows et al. 2011).

Deployment

Most articles found no significant association between deployment in the last year and participation in the labour force (Lim and Schulker 2010), with large proportions of S/Ps reporting no problems with employment during deployment in the last two years (Military One Source 2014). One study found similar proportions of S/Ps reporting no and worse employment problems during Service personnel deployment (Miller, Meadows et al. 2011). Deployment may in fact be associated with increased employment, with significantly lower unemployment among US S/Ps who had experienced multiple deployments in the past year (Military One Source 2014), possibly due to financial concerns during their husband's absence or due to additional support S/Ps receive from colleagues (Atkins 2009). However, one article found deployment was associated with a 3% reduction in US S/P employment rates after adjusting for potential confounding variables (Angrist and Johnson 2000), while another reported 28% of S/Ps had to stop work or decrease their hours because of unexpected deployment extensions (SteelFisher, Zaslavsky et al. 2008).

The association between S/P employment and well-being

Four articles found an association between S/P employment and well-being (articles 4, 5, 7, 19, Table 1). S/Ps who were employed while overseas had significantly higher psychological well-being and marital adjustment scores and significantly lower daily stressor scores than S/Ps who did not work (Manning and DeRouin 1981). Martin surveyed Army partners and found that housing and concerns about starting or finding employment were the largest predictors of life satisfaction (Martin 1984). Ickovics (Ickovics and Martin 1987) found S/P employment was significantly associated with general wellbeing across two time points ($p<0.01$), even when controlling for well-being at T1. However, S/Ps who worked at both time points had the lowest well-being scores which the authors postulate may be due to low paying/low status jobs and potential role overload from balancing family responsibilities with employment. All three studies were conducted during the early 1980s on US Army S/Ps. One study found Australian S/Ps who were employed were significantly more likely to report coping during deployment was easy, those who worked part-time were more likely to report coping was difficult (Atkins 2009). No further articles within this review explored this issue in detail.

Summary

- **The evidence suggests employment outcomes of US S/Ps tend to be poorer than for women in the general population**, although not for S/Ps in other countries. The differences between estimates of employment among US and non-US S/Ps suggest there may be other cultural or military factors affecting the ability or willingness of women in this population to seek or maintain work.
- **Estimates of employment among S/Ps varied depending on the categories used to define employment**, with some articles reporting employed or not employed and others reporting more detailed outcomes such as full-time and part-time work or not participating in the labour force.
- Despite these differences, certain similarities did emerge; **older S/Ps, those with higher education and S/Ps of non-Army personnel had higher levels of employment.**
- **S/Ps with children were less likely to be employed, to work in fulltime employment and worked fewer hours than those without children**.
- **Differences by rank suggested S/Ps of officers were less likely to be in the labour force and S/Ps of lower ranked Service personnel were more likely to be unemployed.**
- **Deployment was found to have little or mixed effects on S/P employment** and may be related to how S/Ps manage the extra responsibilities and stresses during this time.
- **Relocations appeared to have the most impact on employment by reducing the ability of S/Ps to seek out and maintain employment and participate in the work force.**

Mental health among spouses/partners

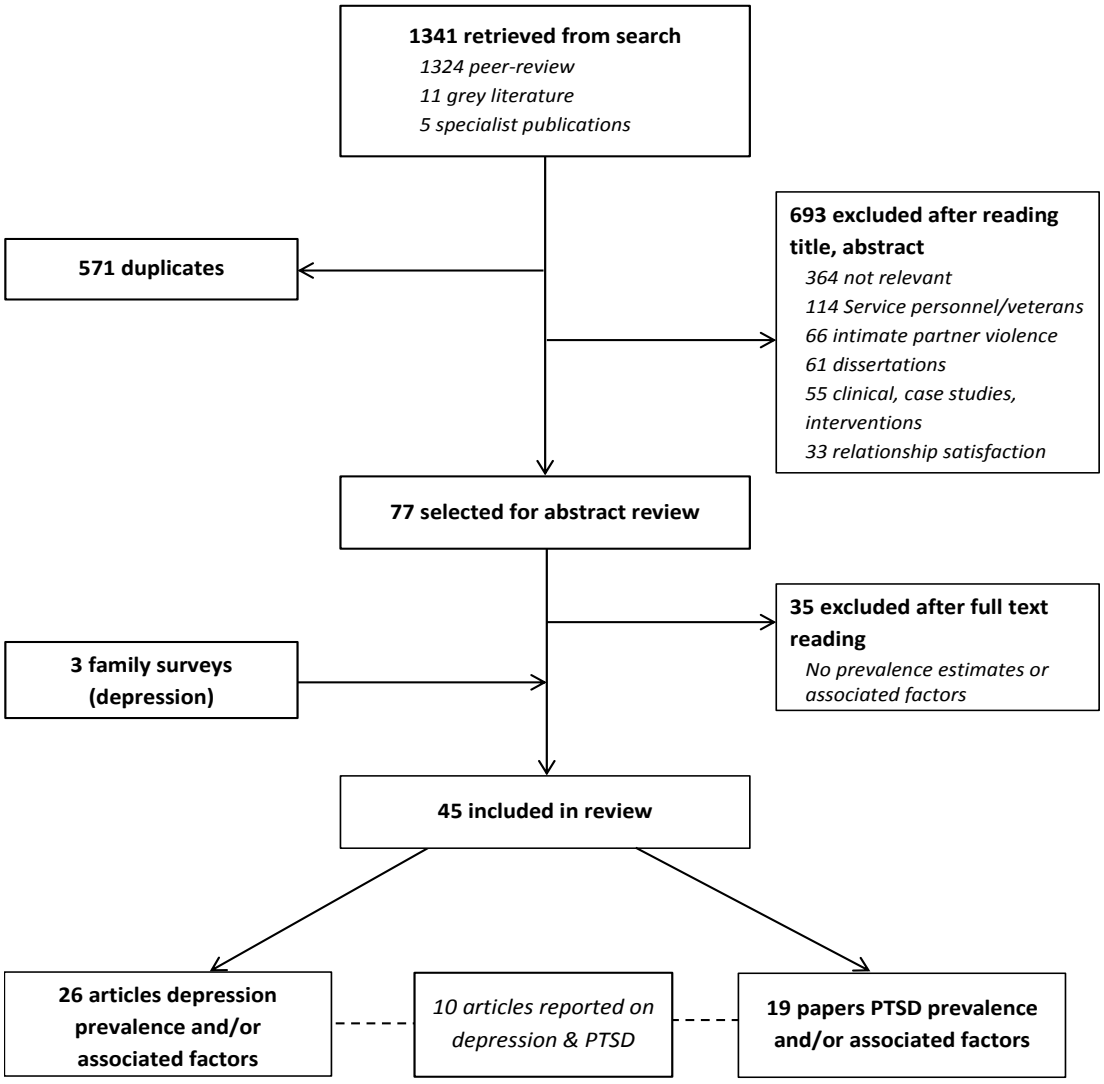
Search results

The literature search of depression and PTSD among S/Ps returned a total of 1341 articles, 1324 peer-reviewed, 11 from the grey literature, five from specialist publications and one article identified from the references (Figure 2); 571 duplicates, 61 dissertations and four non-English articles were excluded as were 628 articles identified as irrelevant following title and abstract review. Seventy-seven articles were selected for full-text reading, 50 related to S/P depression and 27 related to PTSD. Of these, 26 estimated the prevalence of, or factors associated with, depression, and 19 estimated the prevalence of, or factors associated with, PTSD. Three family surveys reporting on S/P depression were included. A total of 45 articles were included in the review, of which ten reported on both depression and PTSD outcomes. The main findings on the prevalence of depression and PTSD among S/Ps and factors associated with these outcomes are presented in Table 2.

Prevalence of depression and PTSD among S/Ps and comparisons with women in the general population

Seven articles estimated the prevalence of depression among S/Ps (articles 6, 12-14, 19, 20, 22, Table 2). Estimates ranged widely from 3.4-44.9%, with four articles providing estimates of between 12-22% (Rosen 1995a, Eaton, Hoge et al. 2008, Renshaw, Rodrigues et al. 2008, Warner, Appenzeller et al. 2009, O'Toole, Outram et al. 2010, Gorman, Blow et al. 2011, Erbes, Meis et al. 2012a). As all the articles in this review used validated measures of depression, this variation in prevalence may be due to the particular characteristics of each study. Some of the articles reporting a higher prevalence were conducted during times of greater stress when symptoms may be higher, such as deployment (Warner, Appenzeller et al. 2009, Erbes, Meis et al. 2012a) or were conducted among S/Ps of US Vietnam veterans seeking treatment for mental health problems (Renshaw, Rodrigues et al. 2008). Others used data from current and former S/Ps of Australian Vietnam veterans (O'Toole, Outram et al. 2010), who may be more similar to women in the general population given the length of time since they were exposed to a military lifestyle. The highest estimates of depression (43.7% and 44.9% respectively) arose from US studies using convenience sampling from family readiness groups (Warner, Appenzeller et al. 2009) and S/Ps of National Guard personnel recently returned from deployment (Renshaw, Rodrigues et al. 2008). However, both estimates may be biased, with low response rates (34%) or small sample sizes (<50) potentially influencing outcomes. If S/Ps with depression were more likely to take part in these studies as a result of the extra support they received, this may have led to biased estimates of depression in the study.

Figure 2: S/P depression and PTSD literature review flow diagram



Twelve articles estimated the prevalence of PTSD among S/Ps (articles 1, 3-5, 7, 10-15, 18, Table 3). Estimates of prevalence using the PCL-C ranged from 2.4-41.6% depending on the criteria for caseness used (Gallagher, Riggs et al. 1998, Frančišković, Stevanović et al. 2007, Renshaw, Rodrigues et al. 2008, Renshaw, Allen et al. 2011, Melvin, Gross et al. 2012, Erbes, Meis et al. 2012a, Hoyt and Renshaw 2013). Other validated measures of PTSD, such as clinical interviews or other screening measures, gave estimates from 14.8-39% of S/Ps (Frančišković, Stevanović et al. 2007, O'Toole, Outram et al. 2010, Gorman, Blow et al. 2011, Herzog, Everson et al. 2011, Wolf, Miller et al. 2012). The highest estimates of PTSD prevalence were from small studies (≤200) of S/Ps of ex-Service personnel in intense treatment programmes or with chronic PTSD (Gallagher, Riggs et al. 1998, Frančišković, Stevanović et al. 2007, Renshaw, Allen et al. 2011).

Comparisons with women in the general population

Five articles compared the prevalence of depression among S/Ps to women in the general population (articles 8, 9, 17, 19, 21, Table 2). Significantly higher depression scores were reported among S/Ps of US and Australian personnel and veterans compared to community samples (Westerink and Giarratano 1999, Alessi, Ray et al. 2001, Lester, Peterson et al. 2010). However, this difference may be down to the general population samples used. Westerink et al used a comparison sample comprised of volunteers from university or hospital staff, who may have been healthier than other groups of possible controls (Westerink and Giarratano 1999). Asbury et al found no significant differences between S/Ps and married college students (Asbury and Martin 2012), but again, the selection of the sample may have masked any true results, with S/Ps taking part in online education likely to be more similar to those within the general population samples.

One article compared the prevalence of depression and PTSD among Australian S/Ps to an age-sex matched sample of women married to civilians. O'Toole et al found a significantly higher relative prevalence of moderate and severe depression and recurrent moderate and severe depression without somatic symptoms in S/Ps; the relative prevalence of PTSD was also significantly higher among S/Ps (O'Toole, Outram et al. 2010).

Socio-demographic and military factors associated with depression, PTSD and alcohol misuse among S/Ps

Twenty articles examined factors associated with depression (articles 1-7, 10, 11, 14-19, 22-26, Table 2) and fourteen examined factors associated with PTSD among S/Ps (articles 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15-19, Table 3). Most articles investigated possible associations using correlations or included S/P depression and PTSD in regression models predicting other outcomes.

Socio-demographic factors

S/P unemployment, absence of children, shorter relationships and lower education were associated with higher S/P depression (Dursun and Sudom 2009, McGarigal, Jablonski et al. 2009, O'Toole, Outram et al. 2010, Faulk, Gloria et al. 2012) and PTSD (Frančišković, Stevanović et al. 2007, Herzog, Everson et al. 2011). S/P depression was also associated with poorer financial well-being (Thoresen and Goldsmith 1987) and family stress (Blow, Gorman et al. 2013).

Military factors

Service personnel military characteristics

Depression was higher among S/Ps of lower ranked Service personnel compared to officers in two articles (Rosen 1995a, Faulk, Gloria et al. 2012). One article found no association between PTSD and rank (Lester, Peterson et al. 2010) while another reported PTSD and officer rank were correlated (Herzog, Everson et al. 2011).

Deployment and combat

The stresses of deployment on S/Ps were indicated by the more than 70% that met criteria for depression and anxiety during Service personnel deployment, reducing to 4% following the return of Service personnel (Rosen 1995a) and the significantly higher depression mean scores reported for S/Ps of currently deployed Canadian Service personnel (Dursun and Sudom 2009). Other articles had mixed results, with no or borderline associations between US S/P depression and deployment (Chartrand, Frank et al. 2008, Lester, Peterson et al. 2010, Erbes, Meis et al. 2012a). The lack of a difference by deployment found in some of the articles in this review may be due to increased resilience among S/Ps who opted to participate in studies during deployments. This is supported by the negative correlation found between number of deployments and depression symptom scores by Faulk et al, suggesting S/Ps adapt to separation from their partner, although this was mediated by personality factors (Faulk, Gloria et al. 2012).

When S/P depression was measured during the deployment cycle may result in different prevalence estimates. Glisson et al found depression decreased in the pre-deployment phase, increasing only once Service personnel had left and then increasing 2 weeks prior to their return (Glisson, Melton et al. 1980), while Kelley et al found the opposite, with higher depression scores at pre- to mid-deployment than following their return (Kelley 1994). How Service personnel adapted to being at home after deployment can also impact on S/Ps, with S/P depression significantly predicted in one study by personal difficulties during reintegration (Knobloch, Ebata et al. 2013).

Service personnel experiences of deployment were also associated with S/P mental health. Four articles found combat exposure and related injuries among Service personnel were significantly positively associated with S/P depression (Kelley 1994, O'Toole, Outram et al. 2010, Faulk, Gloria et al. 2012) and with depression/anxiety (Rosen 1995a).

Further research suggests it is not the deployment itself that is the issue but the length of S/P separation from their husband or partner. Increasing length of Service personnel on combat deployments was associated with increased depression symptomatology among S/Ps in one study (Lester, Peterson et al. 2010), although whether this was due to the nature of the deployment or the length of separation was not clear. However, Mansfield demonstrated a dose response effect of Service personnel deployment length and depression among US S/Ps, with 27.4 (95% CI 22.4-32.3) excess cases for S/Ps of Service personnel deployed between 1-11 months (RR=1.18 (95% CI 1.13-1.23)) and 39.3 (95% CI 33.2-45.4) excess cases of depression per 1000 S/Ps of Service personnel deployed for longer than 11 months (RR= 1.24 (95% CI 1.18-1.31)) compared to S/Ps of non-deployed Service personnel in a four-year period (Mansfield, Kaufman et al. 2010).

None of the articles examining PTSD outcomes among S/Ps found a significant difference according to the current deployment status of Service personnel (McGuire, Runge et al. 2012, Erbes, Meis et al. 2012a). However, the severity of S/P PTSD symptoms were found to increase with increasing number of combat months deployed (Lester, Peterson et al. 2010, Hoyt and Renshaw 2013), with a significantly higher rate of PTSD-related outpatient visits among S/Ps who had experienced Service personnel deployment for longer than 11 months compared to S/Ps of Service personnel who did not deploy (Mansfield, Kaufman et al. 2010).

Transition

The process of leaving Service affected military family members as well, with one study reporting that S/P depression was significantly higher for S/Ps of Russian personnel who were about to leave Service than the S/Ps of those who remained or had left (Rohall, Hamilton et al. 2001), suggesting the uncertainty of the transition period can influence S/P well-being.

The mental health of Service personnel and S/Ps

As well as socio-demographics and military factors, articles examined the influence of the mental health of Service personnel on that of S/Ps. Five articles found depression in S/Ps was significantly correlated and associated with depression among veterans (O'Toole, Outram et al. 2010) and PTSD among current or former Service personnel (Solomon, Waysman et al. 1991, Solomon, Waysman et al. 1992, Klaric, Franciskovic et al. 2012).

Five articles reported an association between S/P PTSD and PTSD among veteran and Service personnel (Gallagher, Riggs et al. 1998, O'Toole, Outram et al. 2010, Herzog, Everson et al. 2011, Klaric, Franciskovic et al. 2012, Blow, Gorman et al. 2013); S/Ps of Service personnel with

PTSD endorsed significantly more PTSD symptoms than S/Ps of those without PTSD (Dirkzwager, Bramsen et al. 2005).

While the articles in this review suggested that at the very least there was an association between PTSD among Service personnel and S/Ps, the nature of this association and the idea that PTSD can be "transferred" from Service personnel to their wife or partner is still debated. Only two articles explored this specific issue. Melvin et al attempted to quantify this association by examining prior trauma among S/Ps and found that while 34% of S/Ps met score criteria for PTSD (PCL score of ≥30), only 2% met criteria for 'secondary' PTSD from Service personnel, with the majority of S/Ps exposed to other forms of trauma that accounted for their initial PTSD caseness (Melvin, Gross et al. 2012). This explanation for "secondary trauma" has been explored further in the work of Renshaw and colleagues, which suggests, albeit somewhat tentatively, that some of the secondary PTSD caseness among S/Ps may in fact reflect generic forms of psychological distress rather than a true "transference" of PTSD (Renshaw, Allen et al. 2011). The authors also found almost two-thirds of S/Ps with PTSD symptoms attributed their symptoms to their own traumatic experiences rather than to their partner's military service. Few of the articles reviewed asked S/Ps of their traumatic experience, the exception being a study of S/Ps who had experienced the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Klaric, Franciskovic et al. 2012). The failure to include this information or the PTSD outcomes of S/Ps themselves potentially underplays the impact of the lives of women on their own mental health while overvaluing the traumatic experiences of Service personnel on S/P mental health.

Summary

- **Differences in participant groups, response rates and measurement criteria gave varying estimates of depression or PTSD among S/Ps, making it difficult to estimate a prevalence range.** Some articles examining PTSD prevalence were conducted on S/Ps of veterans who have not served for significant periods of time, making causal links between military-related PTSD and S/P PTSD difficult to determine.
- **Evidence suggesting higher depression and PTSD among S/Ps than women in the general population was weak.** Comparisons with women in the general population were scarce, questions concerning the appropriateness of the general population samples used in some studies remain and findings were not generally adjusted.
- Although few articles examined socio-demographic or military factors associated with S/P depression or PTSD, **the available evidence suggests S/P mental health was**

associated with S/P employment, education, length of relationship, poor reintegration to civilian life after leaving Service and Service personnel rank and combat exposure.

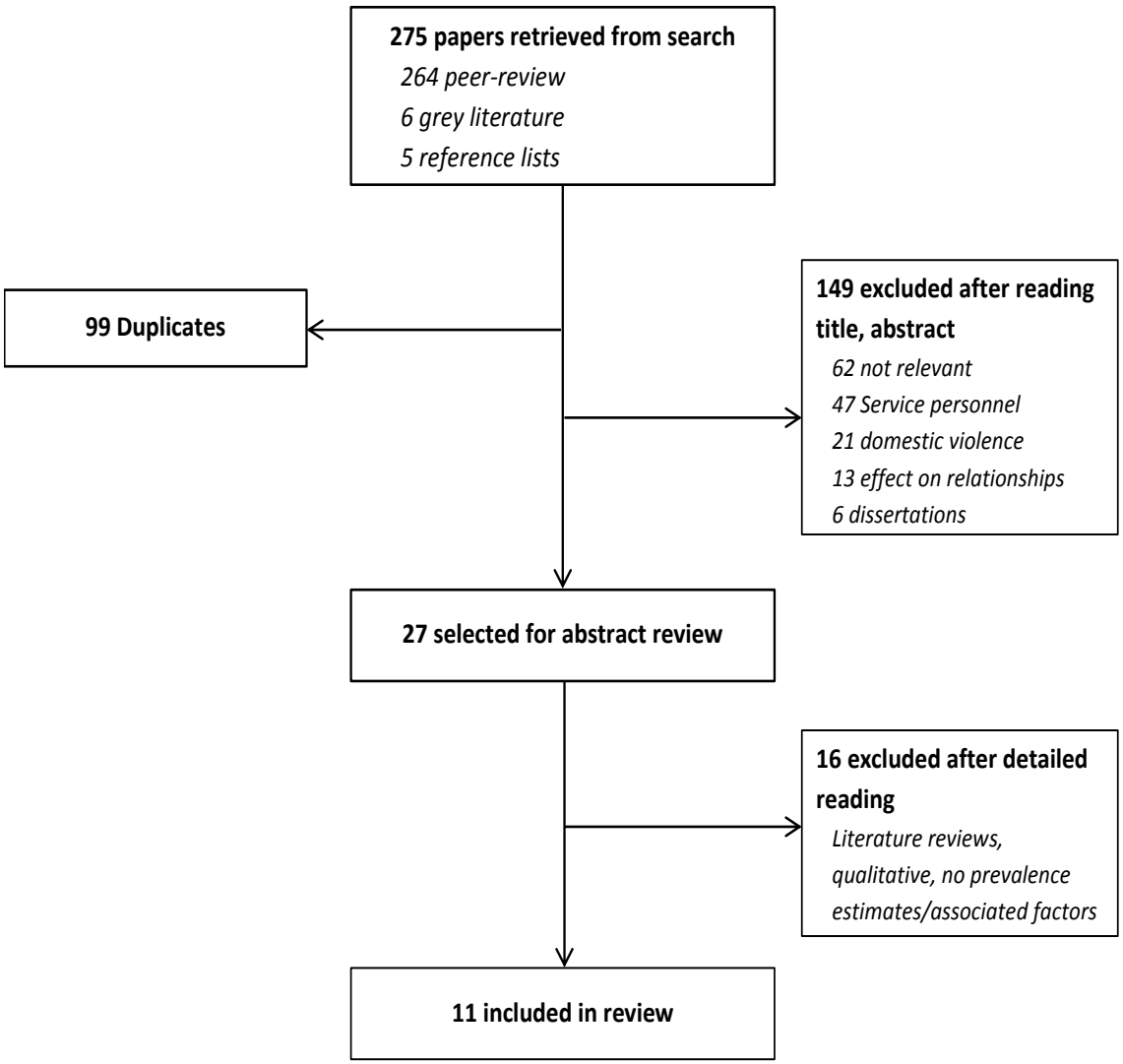
- **Despite a focus on the role of deployment in S/P depression and PTSD, there was mixed evidence for an effect.** Differences in deployment length and when S/Ps were surveyed during the deployment cycle may have obscured associations with poorer S/P mental health.
- **The evidence suggested extensive periods of family separation may play a role in depression among S/Ps** as women struggle to cope with their husband's absence.
- **None of the articles examined the association between depression or PTSD among S/Ps and military relocation.**
- While the evidence indicates an association between S/P and Service personnel mental health, **there was insufficient evidence to support the idea of secondary PTSD between military couples** and some suggestion that this was a form of psychological distress instead**.**

Alcohol misuse among spouses/partners

Search results

The search for articles on alcohol misuse among S/Ps retrieved 275 articles from the literature, 264 peer-reviewed, six from the grey literature and five from reference lists (Figure 3); 99 duplicates and six dissertations and 149 articles that were not relevant after title and abstract review were excluded. No estimates from family surveys were included. A total of 27 articles were selected for full text reading. Of these, 11 articles were included in the review (Table 4), seven of which estimated the prevalence of alcohol misuse amongst S/Ps and nine which identified socio-demographic or military factors associated with alcohol misuse or examined the association between S/P or Service personnel mental health.

Figure 3: S/P alcohol misuse literature review flow diagram



Prevalence of alcohol misuse among S/Ps and comparisons with women in the general population

Based on AUDIT criteria for hazardous alcohol use (score ≥8), two articles reported the prevalence of alcohol misuse among US S/Ps was between 3-4% (Gorman, Blow et al. 2011, Erbes, Meis et al. 2012a), with one study reporting a prevalence of 10.7% (Blow, Gorman et al. 2013). Another using clinical interviews found 6% of US S/Ps reported symptoms of alcohol abuse (Miller, Reardon et al. 2013) and 12% of US S/Ps of Vietnam veterans were found to have a lifetime prevalence of alcohol dependence (Grant, Scherrer et al. 2005). Using a quantity-based measure of alcohol misuse, Padden et al estimated 12.4% of US S/Ps binge-drink (≥5 alcoholic drinks on one occasion) (Padden, Connors et al. 2011). The only non-US article found higher estimates among Australian S/Ps than among US S/Ps, with approximately 9% meeting AUDIT criteria (McGuire, Runge et al. 2012). Due to the lack of articles in this area, articles which assessed alcohol use using non-validated measures were also included and suggested that 2% of US S/Ps of military retirees consumed monthly quantities of alcohol classifying them as heavy drinkers (Haddock, Poston et al. 1995). Whether the difference from other estimates might reflect generational differences in alcohol use or age effects such as a reduction in alcohol consumption by older people was not clear.

Comparisons with women in the general population

None of the articles formally statistically compared the prevalence of alcohol misuse between S/Ps of Service personnel and women in the general population using statistical techniques but some did contrast their findings with general population estimates. Estimates of binge-drinking in US S/Ps (12.4%) were reported to be comparable with those of women in the US population (12.1%) in Padden et al (Padden, Connors et al. 2011). Heavy alcohol consumption among US S/Ps of military retirees (2%) was reported to be lower than among women in the general population of the same age group (9%) in Haddock et al (Haddock, Poston et al. 1995).

Socio-demographic and military factors associated with depression, PTSD and alcohol misuse among S/Ps

Nine articles examined sociodemographic and military factors associated with alcohol misuse by S/Ps (articles 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8-11, Table 4).

Socio-demographic factors

Two articles reported on the association between alcohol misuse and S/P socio-demographics. Blow et al found younger, unmarried and childless S/Ps of US National Guard veterans had higher rates of alcohol misuse than other S/Ps (Blow, Gorman et al. 2013). Given the demographics of the S/Ps included in this study, this may explain the higher prevalence

compared to other US studies, as could the use of National Guard S/Ps, similar to reservists in the UK, compared to S/Ps of enlisted regular personnel. Although inclusive of drug abuse, Padden et al found no association between substance abuse and S/P sociodemographic factors such as age, education or ethnicity, number of children or hours worked outside the home (Padden, Connors et al. 2011). The authors suggested the lack of an association may be explained by the small sample size and an inability to detect differences according to these different groupings of S/Ps due to a lack of power. Combining alcohol and drug misuse in the analyses may have also masked some of the associations with these two outcomes.

Military factors

Service personnel military characteristics

One article reported that alcohol consumption may be linked to a spouse's position in the military hierarchy, with the proportion of S/Ps consuming at least one alcoholic drink per week increasing with Service personnel rank (Johnson, Harsha et al. 1993). As part of the same study, Haddock et al found this relationship was maintained in retired Service personnel and their dependents, with the number of alcoholic drinks per day rising with increasing rank ($r=0.20$, $p<0.001$) (Haddock, Poston et al. 1995). However, neither analysis considered if confounding factors such as age or previous experience of deployments might alter this association.

Deployment

Three articles found that, despite the stresses of deployment, there was no association between Service personnel deployment status and alcohol misuse among S/Ps (Mansfield, Kaufman et al. 2010, McGuire, Runge et al. 2012, Erbes, Meis et al. 2012a). However, increasing lengths of deployment were again found to negatively influence S/P alcohol misuse and subsequent treatment within the TRICARE military healthcare system (Mansfield, Kaufman et al. 2010). S/Ps of Service personnel deployed for longer than 11 months were found to have an increased rate of excess diagnoses of alcohol misuse per 1000 women compared to S/Ps of Service personnel who did not deploy (3.1 (95% CI 1.6-4.5)). The number of excess cases may in fact be higher, if non-military health data had been included. It was also not certain if all S/Ps with alcohol issues sought treatment. In any case, this represents a substantial burden on health care services as well as the ability of military families to cope during deployments. With S/Ps only included in this study if Service personnel had been in the military for a minimum of 5 years, and analyses adjusted for S/Ps age and number of deployments, this suggests the excess alcohol-related morbidity seen in S/Ps experiencing longer deployments may in fact be due to the extensive length of separation rather than a lack of deployment experience.

The return of Service personnel from operations was another time when drinking patterns of both personnel and S/Ps may change as celebrations to welcome personnel home take place. There does appear to be some evidence for an increase in alcohol misuse by S/Ps during this period. Blow et al found 10.7% of spouses of National Guard veterans met the criteria for hazardous drinking using AUDIT (≥8) in the three months following return from deployment (Blow, Gorman et al. 2013), higher than the previous US estimates of misuse by both S/Ps (3-4%) and women in the general population (2.6%). As alcohol misuse was measured in the last month, the authors acknowledge this finding may be an artefact of the phase of the deployment cycle that the survey was conducted in and might reduce once Service personnel were fully reintegrated back into normal family life. It may also reflect the younger age of the sample and the greater proportion of S/Ps without children.

The mental health of Service personnel and S/Ps

The positive correlation between alcohol use within couples in the general population has also been found in military couples by three of the articles in this review (Erbes, Meis et al. 2012a, Blow, Gorman et al. 2013, Miller, Reardon et al. 2013), although of a small to moderate effect size depending on the study (r=0.27-0.48) (Cohen 1992). This may not necessarily translate into greater misuse by S/Ps. One study found that although AUDIT scores were significantly correlated between Service personnel and S/Ps, AUDIT scores were much higher in Service personnel (average difference of 7.4) and only 5.4% of military couples had both members meeting AUDIT criteria for hazardous alcohol use (Blow, Gorman et al. 2013). This suggests the positive correlations between alcohol misuse scores in military couples may not translate into a significant increase in alcohol misuse by S/Ps, at least in the population under study.

Two articles examined how other mental health outcomes of Service personnel influenced alcohol misuse among S/Ps. McGuire et al reported significantly higher odds of alcohol misuse among S/Ps of Service personnel who met score criteria for either PTSD, psychological distress or alcohol misuse (McGuire, Runge et al. 2012), although due to low numbers within caseness categories this could not be adjusted for potential confounders. Despite poorer relationship and life satisfaction among S/Ps of Vietnam era veterans diagnosed with PTSD, Jordan and colleagues found no significant difference in the prevalence of alcohol misuse among S/Ps of Service personnel with (6.6%) or without (6.7%) a PTSD diagnosis (Jordan, Marmar et al. 1992). Given this study oversampled non-cases with high levels of combat exposure or non-specific psychological distress, the lack of association may be explained by the two samples being more similar in terms of potential distress than intended. The study also did not estimate the mental health of S/Ps themselves and, as such, the potential influence of their own mental health on

their alcohol use could not be determined. However, with estimates of alcohol misuse among S/Ps of veterans with PTSD only slightly higher than the approximately 3-4% of US S/Ps meeting alcohol misuse criteria (Gorman, Blow et al. 2011, Erbes, Meis et al. 2012a), this suggests even S/Ps of ex-Service personnel with psychological problems may opt to use mechanisms other than alcohol when coping with potential stress.

Summary

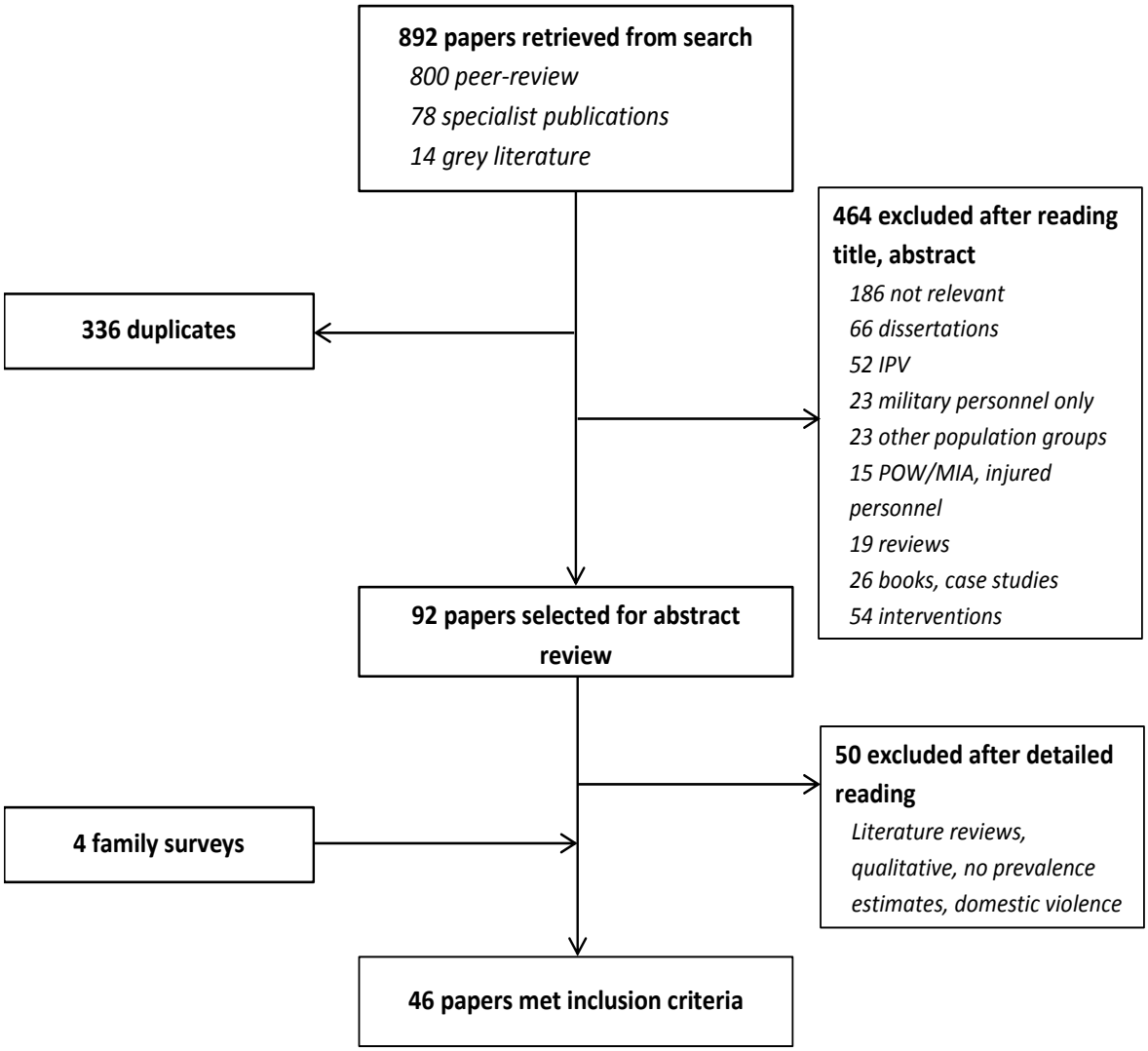
- **The available evidence suggests alcohol misuse was not common among US S/Ps**.
- **As no articles formally compared alcohol misuse among S/Ps to that of women in the general population, no assessment can be made of any potential similarities or differences between these two groups.**
- **There was sparse research into what socio-demographic or military factors may be associated with alcohol misuse among S/Ps.** What evidence was available suggests associations between S/P alcohol misuse and S/P age, marital status, the presence of children, Service personnel rank.
- **Deployment was not significantly associated with alcohol misuse, although increasing lengths of deployment among Service personnel may be associated with increased misuse by S/Ps.**
- **None of the articles examined the effect of military relocation on alcohol use**.
- **Alcohol misuse was correlated between S/Ps and Service personnel but this did not necessarily translate into an increase in the proportion of S/Ps meeting criteria for alcohol misuse.**
- Studies of S/Ps of Vietnam veterans, some of which were conducted many years following their Service, included women who had been in their current relationship for a little as a year. Such S/Ps were not exposed to their partners' PTSD for as long as other S/Ps. As a result, **it was not clear if the increased estimates of alcohol misuse reported in these articles were related to generational differences in alcohol use or to ex-Service personnel's, and therefore S/Ps', experiences of particular deployments**.

Marital satisfaction among spouses/partners

Search results

The literature search of marital satisfaction among S/Ps returned a total of 892 articles, 800 peer-reviewed, 78 from specialist publications and 14 from the grey literature (Figure 4); 336 duplicates, 66 dissertations and 464 articles not relevant to the aims of the review were excluded. After title and abstract review, 92 were selected for full-text reading, of which 50 were excluded. Data from four family surveys were included. A total of 46 articles were included in the review (Table 5).

Figure 4: S/P marital satisfaction literature review flow diagram



Prevalence of marital satisfaction among S/Ps and comparisons with women in the general population

Six articles provided prevalence estimates of marital satisfaction among S/Ps (articles 20, 24, 36, 37, 40, 41, Table 5). Two family surveys suggested a high level of contentment with intimate relationships among S/Ps; at least eight out of ten US Army S/Ps reported being happy, very happy or extremely happy in their relationship (Blue Star Families 2013, Blue Star Families 2014). Estimates reported in other articles via validated multi-dimension measures of marital satisfaction provide similar assessments of the prevalence of marital satisfaction among S/Ps, with marital distress criteria met by 16.7-24.4% of US National Guard and Dutch peacekeeper S/Ps (Dirkzwager, Bramsen et al. 2005, Renshaw, Rodrigues et al. 2008, Campbell and Renshaw 2013). As might be expected, a higher prevalence of marital distress has been found in treatment-seeking populations; Bergmann et al found 38% of US active duty Army couples recruited as part of a relationship education programme met Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale criteria for marital dissatisfaction (Bergmann, Renshaw et al. 2014a).

Comparisons with women in the general population

One article compared marital satisfaction among S/Ps to women in the general population. Ashbury and Martin found S/Ps of deployed US Service personnel had significantly higher mean marital discord scores than college students married to civilians, a difference not explained by length of marriage or number of children (Asbury and Martin 2012). Renshaw stated that the prevalence of 16.7% estimated in their study was within the range of civilian studies 6-26% but did not compare these estimates using statistical methods (Renshaw, Rodrigues et al. 2008).

Socio-demographic and military factors associated with marital satisfaction among S/Ps

While many articles controlled for socio-demographic variables as potential confounders or in path models, only five reported findings regarding their potential effect on estimates of marital satisfaction (articles 3, 4, 7, 9, 22, Table 5). Ten articles examined how factors unique to military life affected the marital satisfaction of S/Ps (articles 1, 4, 6, 22, 24, 26, 28, 31, 39, 43, Table 5).

Socio-demographics

Increasing S/P age and lower educational attainment (no college degree vs college degree) were associated with decreasing marital satisfaction among US S/Ps (Rosen and Moghadam 1991, Burrell, Adams et al. 2006a). Research on US Air Forces S/Ps found employment status

did not predict S/P marital adjustment, with no difference according to family life-cycle (presence and age of children), rank (officers vs. enlisted) or base location (US or overseas) (Bowen 1987).

Military factors

With few articles examining the influence of military factors on marital satisfaction, there was weak evidence regarding the associations found. Nearly 30% of US S/Ps reported that relationship or marital problems were stressors specifically attributable to their time in the military (Blue Star Families 2014), suggesting this is a somewhat common issue among military couples.

Service personnel military characteristics and military life

Studies of S/Ps of US Army reserve personnel found that significantly more reported relationship difficulties than S/Ps of regular personnel (Chandra, Lara-Cinisomo et al. 2011). The role of the military community in supporting relationships was suggested by the positive correlation between marital satisfaction and the perception of available support from the military (Joseph and Afifi 2010).

Military relocation

Only one article examined the impact of military relocation on the marital satisfaction of S/Ps. Burrell et al found no significant association between the impact of moving or the impact of foreign residence on S/P marital satisfaction (Burrell, Adams et al. 2006a) – a significant association was found for impact of separations.

Deployment and combat

Six articles examined deployment and marital satisfaction and suggested this outcome may vary depending on when in the deployment cycle estimates were obtained (articles 1, 26, 31, 34, 39, 43, Table 5). Marital satisfaction decreased significantly from pre- to post- deployment for both US and international S/Ps (Borelli, Sbarra et al. 2013, Andres 2014), while other articles reported a slightly different pattern, with higher satisfaction just prior to and after the return of Service personnel (Glisson, Melton et al. 1980). Both were suggestive of a "honeymoon effect". Prevalence estimates taken in the reintegration period indicated nearly 20% of Dutch peacekeeper S/Ps reported being less satisfied in their relationship in the 3 months following separation (Andres 2014). A similar increase in marital dissatisfaction following the return of Service personnel was found among US National Guard couples, with 32.7% of couples at T1 having one or both members meet DAS criteria for marital distress,

increasing to 52.2% 6-9 months after returning from deployment (Erbes, Meis et al. 2012b). These findings suggested some couples may have difficulty readjusting to family life following the separation of deployment. Other articles reported no effect by deployment cycle (Dursun and Sudom 2009). However, there was some evidence that S/Ps become accustomed to deployments and learn to cope better during their husbands' absence, with no difference in marital satisfaction according to the number or length of deployments for US S/Ps (Borelli, Sbarra et al. 2013) and fewer marital problems reported among Canadian S/Ps of Service personnel who were currently deployed (Chandra, Lara-Cinisomo et al. 2011).

Combat exposure or S/P perceptions of combat exposure were not found to be associated with S/P marital satisfaction (Renshaw, Rodrigues et al. 2008).

Marital satisfaction between S/Ps and Service personnel

Nine articles examined the association between levels of marital satisfaction reported by S/Ps and Service personnel and reported medium to strong correlations within couples (r=0.51 - 0.77) (Pittman 1994, Taft, King et al. 1999, Nelson Goff, Crow et al. 2007, Renshaw, Rodrigues et al. 2008, Hamilton, Nelson Goff et al. 2009, Blow, Gorman et al. 2013, Campbell and Renshaw 2013, Monk and Goff 2014, Bergmann, Renshaw et al. 2014a). One study similarly reported that S/P marital satisfaction was associated with Service personnel marital satisfaction (Westman, Vinokur et al. 2004) (Table 5).

Mental health and marital satisfaction among S/Ps

A total of thirty-four articles across all of the reviews investigated the effect of mental health, primarily of Service personnel, on the marital satisfaction of S/Ps (articles 6, 8-21, 23-27, 29, 31-35, 37, 38, 40, 42-46, Table 5). These are summarised below rather than within the individual reviews in order to provide a coherent overview of the findings.

Alcohol misuse

One study found no significant association between S/P marital satisfaction and alcohol misuse by either S/Ps or Service personnel; there was also no difference according to the congruency of alcohol use within military couples (Blow, Gorman et al. 2013).

Depression and psychological distress

S/P depression was moderately correlated with marital quality and satisfaction scores (r=-0.32 - -0.51) (Renshaw, Rodrigues et al. 2008, Dursun and Sudom 2009, Blow, Gorman et al. 2013) and marital satisfaction was significantly predicted by S/P's own depression (Klaric,

Franciskovic et al. 2011, Blow, Gorman et al. 2013). Similar findings were apparent for S/P psychological well-being (Westman, Vinokur et al. 2004, Dekel, Solomon et al. 2005, Renshaw, Rodebaugh et al. 2010, Campbell and Renshaw 2012, Renshaw and Caska 2012, Andres 2014, MacDonell, Thorsteinsson et al. 2014). This effect was not limited to the S/P's own depression however, with moderate correlations between S/P marital satisfaction and veteran and Service personnel psychological distress and depression (Westman, Vinokur et al. 2004, Dekel, Solomon et al. 2005, Renshaw, Rodrigues et al. 2008), especially for S/Ps with children (Medway, Davis et al. 1995). Studies using dyadic models of military couples found US National Guard S/Ps marital satisfaction was strongly predicted by their own depression ($B=-0.54$, $p<0.01$) as well as by depression among Service personnel ($B=-0.36$, $p<0.01$) (Blow, Gorman et al. 2013).

PTSD

Five articles found Service personnel and veteran PTSD significantly predicted marital satisfaction among US National Guard and Army S/Ps (Renshaw, Rodebaugh et al. 2010, Campbell and Renshaw 2012, Erbes, Meis et al. 2012b, Campbell and Renshaw 2013, Bergmann, Renshaw et al. 2014a). Compared to women in a relationship with Service personnel who do not have PTSD, S/Ps of Service personnel with PSTD were significantly more likely to endorse have relationship dissatisfaction, distress or marital problems (Jordan, Marmar et al. 1992, Solomon, Waysman et al. 1992, Riggs, Byrne et al. 1998). This association appears to increase with increasing severity of PTSD, with a dose response relationship demonstrated among Dutch peacekeepers S/Ps; the prevalence of marital dissatisfaction increased from 24% to 26% and 39% for S/Ps of Service personnel endorsing one, two or three PTSD symptom clusters respectively compared to 16% among S/Ps of those endorsing no symptoms (Dirkzwager, Bramsen et al. 2005). One study reported no evidence of a relationship between Service personnel PTSD and S/P marital satisfaction after controlling for other variables (Blow, Gorman et al. 2013), or only moderate associations with a measure capturing aspects of posttraumatic stress as well as other mental health symptoms (Nelson Goff, Crow et al. 2007). This may be a result of either a low prevalence of PTSD amongst Service personnel and/or small sample size within the studies.

The association between S/P marital satisfaction and Service personnel PTSD may vary according to the particular symptom clusters Service personnel endorse, with US and international studies suggesting that avoidance, arousal or emotional numbing symptom clusters among Service personnel were significant predictors of marital dissatisfaction and greater relationship problems among S/Ps (Hendrix, Erdmann et al. 1998, Riggs, Byrne et al.

1998, Klaric, Franciskovic et al. 2011, Renshaw, Campbell et al. 2014b). S/P perceptions of their husband/partners' combat exposure and greater communication and disclosure about traumatic events may mediate the association between Service personnel PTSD/PTSD clusters and S/P marital satisfaction (Renshaw, Rodrigues et al. 2008, Renshaw and Caska 2012, Campbell and Renshaw 2013, Renshaw, Allen et al. 2014a).

It is important when examining this association that trauma experienced by both couple members is taken in account. Trauma among US S/Ps was a significant predictor of lower S/P marital satisfaction (Hamilton, Nelson Goff et al. 2009, Monk and Goff 2014) - in particular, re-experiencing symptoms were associated with lower marital satisfaction in US and Bosnian S/Ps (Hamilton, Nelson Goff et al. 2009, Klaric, Franciskovic et al. 2011). The authors suggested PTSD in Service personnel reminds S/Ps of their own experiences of trauma, triggering re-experiencing of these events. The cumulative trauma within military couples should be considered, with lower relationship adjustment scores among military couples where one or both members had PTSD or in couples with increasing combined PTSD scores (Klaric, Franciskovic et al. 2011, Melvin, Gross et al. 2012).

Family and social life

The remainder of the articles examined the relationship between marital satisfaction and family or social life. Many articles reported lifestyle problems, coping, finances, housing problems, parenting stress, poor communication or bonding, family chaos, social support and family issues were associated or correlated with poorer marital satisfaction among S/Ps (Martin and Ickovics 1987, Thoresen and Goldsmith 1987, Rosen and Moghadam 1991, Medway, Davis et al. 1995, Paulus, Nagar et al. 1996, Hendrix, Erdmann et al. 1998, Westman, Vinokur et al. 2004, Dursun and Sudom 2009, Allen, Rhoades et al. 2010, Joseph and Afifi 2010, Campbell and Renshaw 2012, Blow, Gorman et al. 2013, Andres 2014, MacDonell, Thorsteinsson et al. 2014). Differential perceptions of gender roles between husband and wife were reported to be associated with tension within military couples. Air Force couples where husbands held traditional views of gender roles and wives had more egalitarian views had significantly lower marital quality scores compared to couples with similar views of gender roles (Bowen and Orthner 1983), although a follow-up study by the same author did not find an association (Bowen 1989). Other articles suggested it may not be the roles that S/Ps perform but how satisfied they were in performing them and how in control of their lives they may feel that influences marital satisfaction (Rosen, Ickovics et al. 1990, Rosen and Moghadam 1991). These issues had not been examined in more recent articles.

Summary

- **Few articles reported prevalence estimates of marital satisfaction among S/Ps, although those that did suggested the majority of S/Ps were happy in their relationships**. The majority of the articles in the review examined factors associated with marital satisfaction and did not report prevalence estimates for S/P marital satisfaction.
- Where the association between marital satisfaction and socio-demographic and military variables were investigated, there was a reliance on correlations rather than more robust methods such as regression which would have allowed for potential confounders to be controlled for.
- **The available evidence suggests S/P marital satisfaction varies according to Service personnel marital satisfaction, S/P education, S/P age, Service personnel reserve status with mixed evidence regarding an association between marital satisfaction and Service personnel deployment depending on when this was measured**.
- **S/P marital satisfaction was not associated with military relocation** but was associated with family separation.
- **The available evidence suggests S/P and Service personnel depression and PTSD was related to S/P marital satisfaction.** Lower marital satisfaction in military couples may result when both couple members met criteria for mental health problems, especially PTSD.

Military relocation

Scoping review

The influence of military relocation on the mental health and well-being of S/Ps was discussed within each of the previous literature reviews as appropriate. While military relocation was associated with poorer employment outcomes among S/Ps, only one quantitative study had examined the association with other outcomes such as mental health and marital satisfaction. As a review of the quantitative and qualitative literature in relation to overseas relocations had recently been conducted (Blakely, Hennessy et al. 2012c), rather than replicate this work, I conducted a scoping review to include any articles published after this review. Articles published in English after 2009, the date of the latest article included in the review, until 2014 were reviewed. As in previous literature reviews, dissertations and theses were excluded.

The scoping review identified five articles that explored the S/P mental health and well-being during military relocation. While some of these articles included male S/Ps, not all findings were reported separately by gender.

One quantitative study of Greek S/Ps found geographical mobility was negatively associated with S/P satisfaction with Army life and S/P marital satisfaction (Bellou and Gkousgkounis 2015). The remaining four articles were qualitative. Blakely undertook a qualitative study of the impact of overseas accompanied postings on S/Ps (Blakely, Hennessy et al. 2014b); while the majority of participants were female, one male S/P was included. This study described how the individual characteristics of S/Ps and their previous experiences of accompanied postings influenced how S/Ps adjusted to the challenges of being overseas and in particular the impact on their employment and careers. The meanings S/Ps attached to their experiences and their willingness to adjust to their new situation were important for S/Ps in managing the potentially negative effects of overseas. Some S/Ps were able to see the opportunity for self-improvement while others struggled with autonomy and identity as “dependents” within the military community. S/Ps described the importance of social support in their new community in helping them to settle in, although some of this support, especially that which formed around children, was seen as creating somewhat artificial relationships with other S/Ps. Similar findings were reported from analysis of data from an online forum but also included decision-making regarding accompanied or unaccompanied postings and the influence of overseas postings on intimate relationships (Blakely, Hennessy et al. 2014a). A qualitative study of the responses of male and female Australian S/Ps described other aspects of accompanied postings, including missing extended family, the difficulties of managing the logistics of moving

and the impacts on the education of children but did not explore elements of S/P well-being (Runge, Waller et al. 2014).

Another important piece of work, included in the review in dissertation form but subsequently published, was a qualitative psycho-analytical study of the emotional impact of overseas accompanied postings on UK S/Ps (Jervis 2011). As with Blakely's work, this was limited to S/Ps on overseas accompanied postings, although it included S/Ps of all three Services within the British military and those of different rank. The main focus of this study were the losses S/Ps experienced as a result of military relocation, including meaningful friendships, the presence of their children at home, employment, status and familiar environments. Jervis outlined how the incorporation of women into the military community and ethos led them to minimise or deny the impact of these experiences on their emotional well-being, leading to a loss of identity and autonomy that prevented women from expressing their distress and grief.

Critique of the literature

There were certain limitations to the articles retrieved from the literature searches of S/P mental health and well-being outcomes and the scoping review of military relocation that should be considered. These limitations suggest caution should be applied in relation to the generalizability of the findings not just to the wider community of US S/Ps but to S/Ps in other countries as well. As previously discussed, although not formally assessed, the discussion of these limitations follows similar criteria as used in critical literature appraisal.

Study design

- **Articles largely reported findings from cross-sectional studies** examining prevalence and associations with basic social and military demographics, with no longitudinal studies. Appraising the recruitment method, sample population and response rate of such studies should be undertaken to determine how generalizable the study findings may be to wider populations of S/Ps.
- **The majority of** articles **were based on US data**. The dominance of US based research and lack of evidence from other countries is important to note, as cultural differences between US civilian and military cultures and that of other nations means that findings may not be applicable outside the US.
- **Sample sizes ranged from 105 to 250,000 participants, with most** articles **containing between 200-500 participants**
- **Response rates ranged from 13% in military families surveys to 92% in other** articles**.** In other articles, the use of data from mandatory community survey or censuses meant

such statistics were not relevant. The use of convenience sampling meant responses rates were not available in some articles. Findings from articles reporting no or low response rates should be treated with caution given the possibility of selection bias.

- **Some articles included both female and male spouses of Service personnel and findings were not always reported by gender.** Given the differences in psychological and social outcomes between the genders, as well as differences in institutional and social norms, this may have under-estimated the effect of some variables on the outcomes under review.

Outcome measurement

- **The various measures used to assess the outcomes of S/Ps made comparison of some estimates difficult, even for those using validated measures due to the use of different caseness criteria.** For example, articles in the employment review used varying classifications to describe employment among S/Ps, with some reporting the proportion of employed or unemployed S/Ps, while others used more detailed economic categorisations such as not in the labour force (not working, not looking for work). Articles reporting estimates from non-validated measures may provide less accurate estimates. While mixing validated and non-validated measures for other outcomes has implications for the comparability of estimates across articles, including these increased the number of articles in the reviews and provided additional information in relation to the outcomes.
- **Despite validated measures of marital satisfaction being available since the 1970s, some studies relied on one- or two-item questions of relationship happiness or non-validated measures of marital satisfaction**. As a result, articles in the review discuss slightly different outcomes such as marital satisfaction, marital quality, marital tension and marital adjustment. Because of the use of different measures, it was not clear whether the various articles were in fact capturing the same elements of marital satisfaction.
- **One issue of concern within the literature was the heterogeneity of the study samples across the literature**, such as spouses and partners of active duty Service personnel and National Guard studied separately. Few articles contrasted the outcomes of these two groups. The inclusion of Vietnam veteran S/Ps also complicates the generalisability of the findings. Some articles included such S/Ps if they had been in a relationship with veterans for as little as 1 year rather than since his time of Service. This may possibly have masked any associations between veteran and S/P outcomes.

- The operations by UN and NATO countries in the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts gave rise to an opportunity for research to examine the potential effects of the deployment of Service personnel on relationships and resulted in a large number of articles from this period. **Because of this, many of the studies were conducted during specific phases of the deployment cycle**. The resulting prevalence estimates may therefore not be applicable to populations of S/Ps who were not experiencing current or recent deployments.

Analytical techniques

- **Articles published prior to 2000 conducted much of their analysis using non-regression techniques**. Articles after this time period were able to take advantage of more complex methods such as regression analyses. More recent articles employed dyadic analysis techniques to investigate marital satisfaction among military couples.

Literature review summary

Prevalence estimates

- **Differences in participant groups, response rates and measurement criteria gave mixed evidence regarding the prevalence of employment, depression or PTSD among S/Ps.**
- **However, the evidence suggested the prevalence of S/P employment tended to be poorer than for women in the general population.**
- **There were few** articles **reporting the prevalence of alcohol misuse or marital dissatisfaction. Those that were conducted suggested the prevalence of both outcomes was low among S/Ps.**
- There was no or weak evidence regarding comparisons between the mental health, alcohol misuse and marital distress outcomes of S/Ps and women in the general population.

Associated socio-demographic and military factors

- **Employment was higher among older S/Ps, those with higher education and S/Ps of non-Army personnel; employment was lower among S/Ps of lower ranked Service personnel, especially those in the Army, and those with children.**
- **S/P employment was associated with S/P well-being.**

- **Military relocation appeared to have a larger impact on employment than deployment** but there was no evidence regarding an association with depression, PTSD or alcohol misuse.
- **Employment was lower among S/Ps who relocated to rural areas, overseas or lived near military bases.**
- **S/P depression or PTSD was associated with S/P employment, education, length of relationship, poor reintegration to civilian life after leaving Service, Service personnel rank and combat exposure.** There were no or few associations between Service personnel deployment and S/P depression, PTSD, alcohol misuse and marital satisfaction depending on when outcomes were measured.
- **S/P depression and PTSD were associated with Service personnel depression and PTSD, but there was inconclusive evidence regarding secondary PTSD among S/Ps.**
- **Family separation may influence S/P depression, alcohol misuse and marital satisfaction.**
- **S/P alcohol misuse was associated with S/P age, marital status, the presence of children, Service personnel rank and service.**
- **Alcohol misuse was correlated between S/Ps and Service personnel** but this did not necessarily translate into an increase in the proportion of S/Ps meeting criteria for alcohol misuse.
- **S/P marital satisfaction was associated with Service personnel marital satisfaction, education and age.**
- **S/P and Service personnel depression and PTSD was related to S/P marital satisfaction.**

Military relocation

- **Few quantitative or qualitative studies of accompanied postings have been conducted.**
- **Military relocation was associated with S/P employment.**
- **There was mixed evidence for an association between military relocation and S/P marital satisfaction.**
- **No articles examined the relationship between military relocation and mental health or alcohol misuse.**
- **Qualitative studies of the well-being of UK S/Ps during accompanied postings have explored overseas postings only. They described the impact of the loss of identity, agency and social support on the well-being of S/Ps.**

Table 1: Literature review articles - prevalence of S/P employment, comparisons with women in the general population and associated factors

Employment among UK S/Ps						
No.	**Authors**	**Date**	**Prevalence**	**Socio-demographic associations**	**Military factors associations**	**Associations with mental health**
1	Ministry of Defence	2014a	FT employment 40%, PT 22%, SATP 20%, unemployed 13% (6% seeking work, 7% not seeking work), in training/education 6% 48% who accompanied partner overseas able to obtain paid employment	-	**Service** - FT employment RAF 47%, RN/RM 41%, Army 36% / PT employment RN/RM 29%, RAF 24%, Army 18% - SATP RAF 21%, RN/RM 20%, Army 20% - Not employed, seeking work Army 7%, RAF 5%, RN/RM 4% - NILF Army 11%, RN/RM 3%, RAF 3%	-
2	Ministry of Defence	2014b	FT/PT employment 63%, unemployed 21%, in training/education or voluntary employment 4% - 12% working in Armed Forces	-	**Service & Rank** - FT/PT/self-employment RM 74%, RN 67%, RAF 63%, Army 60% - Not employed Army 25%, RAF 17%, RN 15%, RM 14% - Education/training/voluntary work RM 6%, RN 5%, Army 5%,	-

					RAF 4% - Minimal differences by rank (officer vs other)	
Employment among international S/Ps and comparisons with women in the general population – international evidence						
3	Grossman	1981	**Compared to women married to civilians** 50.2% of S/Ps in labour force compared to 49.4% of women married to civilians in 1979	-	-	-
4	Manning and DeRouin	1981	**-**	-	-	**Life satisfaction, marital adjustment and psychological well-being** - significantly higher scores on psychological well-being scale, significantly higher "happy" on daily living scale and significantly more positive score on marital adjustment scales among working S/Ps compared to those at

						home (p<0.01)
5	Martin	1984	-	-	-	**Life satisfaction** - life satisfaction of S/P associated with employment issues (obtaining or maintaining job/career) (β=0.204, p<0.05) - accounts for 27% of variance in life satisfaction along with housing issues (β=0.415, p<0.05)
6	Hayghe	1986	**Compared to women married to civilians** 52% of S/Ps in labour force compared to 55% of women married to civilians in 1979 – diffs by age - increasing prevalence of employment among S/Ps since 1970	**Age** - fewer S/Ps aged 45+ (6%) in labour force compared to women married to civilians (50%) - more S/Ps aged 25-34 (49%) and 35-44 (26%) in labour force compared to women married to civilians (both 23%)	-	-

	Ickovics and Martin	1987	27% employed at T1, rising to 34.2% six months later	**Children** - S/P without children more likely to be working at both time points (X^2=16.65, df=3, p<0.001) – number of children not associated with employment	-	**General well-being** - S/P general well-being (GWB scale) associated with employment (F(3, 270)=4.94, p<0.003) – employment associated with GWB at T2 after adjusting for GWB at T1 – lowest scores among S/Ps who worked at both time points
7	Rosen, Ickovics et al	1990	FT employment 22.4%, 16.6% PT, unemployed 25.7%, NILF 49.0%	-	-	-
8	Schwartz, Wood, et al	1990	**Compared to women married to civilians** 52% of S/Ps in labour force compared to 67% of women married to civilians in 1979 – diffs by age	**Age** - associated with increased probability of employment (prob.=0.0932, p<0.01) **Education** - associated with increased probability of employment (prob.= 0.0496, p<0.01)	**Relocation** - associated with decreased probability of employment (prob.=-0.2041, p<0.01) **In relationship with Service personnel** - associated with decreased probability of employment	-

				Occupation - managerial (prob.=0.5161, p<0.01) professional (prob.=0.5868, p<0.01) and health/teaching (prob.=0.8096, 0.7810, p<0.01) occupations associated with increased probability of employment **Children** - associated with decreased probability of employment (0-2 years prob.=-0.3053, p<0.01), 12-17 years prob.=-0. 3120, p<0.01)	(prob.=-0.4635, p<0.01)	
9	Schwartz, Wood, et al	1991	40.8% employed, 35.5% FT	**Education** - 35% of S/Ps with <12 yrs education in labour force compared to 73% of S/Ps with highest education - not associated with probability of employment	**Rank** - probability of employment increases with being officer rank (prob.=0.1891, p<0.01) **Relocation** - probability of employment	

				Children - 41% of S/Ps with children under in labour force compared with 68% of S/Ps with children aged 12-17 years - probability of employment decreases with age of children (prob. youngest child 0-5 years=-0.2444, p<0.01)	increases with months at location (prob.=0.0166, p<0.01)	
10	Lakhani	1994	-	-	**Location** - 65% S/Ps based in US were employed (54%) part-time) compared with 35% of S/Ps based overseas (46% part-time)	-
11	Stander, McClure et al	1994	FT employment 31.0%, PT 17.5%, homemaker/parent at home 31.2%, unemployed 7.7% - remainder students, retired, voluntary work, self-employed	-	**Relocation** - 44% left last job because of change of posting, nearly 50% of S/Ps been in current job for less than a year	-

12	Angrist and Johnson	2000	-	-	**Deployment** - associated with a 3% reduction in employment rates of married S/Ps	-
13	Hosek, Asch et al	2002	-	**Children** - having children associated with 12 weeks less work, 15% decrease in probability of working FT, 21% decrease in probability of working compared to S/Ps without children	-	-
14	Harrell et al	2004	-	**Education** - employment increased with increasing education – but compared to those with high school/GED education, return is higher for Army (125% increase compared to those with high education) and Marines compared to women married to civilians, Navy and Air force	**Service & Rank** - regression modelling to estimate impact of being S/Ps on women with similar demographics - Army and Marine S/Ps less likely to be employed - Army S/Ps most likely to be seeking work but all services higher than women in general population - when socio-	-

				Children - having young children associated with increased unemployment - 25% for all S/Ps - 41% for Army & 36% for Navy	demographic characteristics held constant, S/Ps still more likely to be seeking work **Relocation** - Army most affected by across state moves – which is most of moves – nearly 5% decrease in odds of employment - Non-metropolitan areas decrease odds of employment, esp. for Air Force S/Ps (30%), but also Marines (20%) and Army (15%)	
15	Cooke and Speirs	2005	-	**Gender** - female gender (β=0.879, $p<0.05$) associated with decreasing labour-market status (i.e. employed to unemployed and not looking) - being female associated with decreased hours worked (β=-9.781, $p<0.001$)	**Relocation** - 66% female S/Ps who moved worked in previous year compared with 76% of those who did not - 57% of female S/Ps who moved in labour force compared to 69% of those who did not - 52% of female S/Ps who moved	-

				Children - having children (β=0.196, p<0.01) associated with decreasing labour-market status (i.e. employed to unemployed and not looking) - being a parent associated with decreased hours worked (β=-3.703, p<0.001), being female (β=-9.781, p<0.001) **Age** - increasing age (β=0.027, p<0.001), having a job in previous year (β=3.127, p<0.001) associated with increasing labour market status - hours worked associated with age (β=0.129, p<0.001), having a job in previous year (β=15.719, p<0.001)	in labour force compared to 65% of those who did not - female S/Ps who moved more likely to not work and work fewer hours than those who did not - migration associated with 9% increase in unemployment, 10% drop in employment, 4hr decrease in hours worked per week **Rank** - not associated with employment (β=-0.115, p>0.05) - not associated with hours worked (β=-0.179, p>0.05)	

				Education - having college degree (β=0.185, p<0.001) associated with increasing labour market status **Local labour market** - hours worked associated with local area unemployment rate (β=-0.264, p<0.001)		
16	Lim, Gollinelli et al	2007	-	-	**Service** - proportion of Army and Marine S/Ps employed the lowest of the Services but higher proportion were unemployed or not in the labour force (data presented as graphs)	-
17	SteelFisher, Zaslavsky et al	2008	41.8% employed (average of two groups)	-	**Deployment** - 18% endorsed problems with job because of deployment; 28% endorsed unexpected deployment extension reported having to stop work or reduce	-

					hours, 18% had to take up work or increase hours - significantly higher proportion S/Ps endorsed stopping or reducing working hours among those experiencing deployment extensions compared to those who did not (27.9% vs. 12.9%, $p<0.05$)	
18	Atkins	2009	FT employment 40.2%, PT 31.2% , unemployed or retired 28.7%	-	**Relocation** - 44.5% endorsed establishing employment difficult/very difficult after relocation, 32.8% easy/very easy, 22.6% neither easy or difficult - S/Ps in FT employment significantly more likely to endorse (agree/strongly agree) they would encourage Service personnel to leave if posted to a location to where they did not want to go compared to other respondents ($X^2(4)=21.19$,	**Coping** -respondents in FT employment significantly more likely to report coping during deployment was easy, respondents in PT employment more likely to report coping was difficult ($X^2(4)=15.97$, $p=0.003$)

					p=0.000) (%n not given)	
19	Cooney, Segal et al	2009	55% employed, 10% unemployed, 35% NILF (includes male S/Ps)	**Gender** -female S/Ps 43.7% less likely to be employed than men (adj. OR 0.563, p<0.001) **Education** - for female S/Ps, time between moves (adj. OR 1.039, p<0.01) , time on station (adj. OR 1.155, p<0.001), having some college education to graduate school (adj. OR 1.45-2.73, p<0.001) associated with higher odds of employment **Children** - having children (adj. OR 0.878, p<0.001), having children less than 6 years of age (adj. OR 0.489, p<0.001), less than high school education (adj. OR 0.661, p<0.001) associated with	**Service and rank** - for women S/Ps, being non-Army S/P (adj. OR1.20-1.38, p<0.01) associated with higher odds of employment - being S/P of officer associated with lower odds of employment (adj. OR 0.608, p<0.001)	-

				lower odds of employment		
20	Dursun and Sudom	2009	FT employment 45.5%, PT 19.9%, SATP 18.0%, unemployed 9.2%, other 7.4%	-	-	-
21	Dunn, Urban et al	2010	**Compared to women in general population** - 77.2% of women in general population employed compared to 73.4% of S/Ps - higher percentage of S/Ps NILF 21.5%, unemployed 5.1% compared to women in general population 18.6%, 4.3% respectively	-	**Rank** - 70.0% officer S/Ps employed compared with 74.9% S/Ps other rank, 5.9% unemployed compared with 4.7% and 24% NILF compared with 20.4%	-
22	Lim and Schulker	2010	FT employment 34%, PT 16%, 50% unemployed - 43% NILF - Of S/Ps in labour force, 12% unemployed, 60% FT, 28% PT, nearly 20% in	**Education** - S/Ps with some college education significantly less likely to be NILF (-0.379, $p<0.05$) or unemployed - S/Ps with graduate degree	**Service & Rank** - NILF similar across all services - Navy & Marine S/Ps significantly more likely to be in voluntary PT work (0.03, $p<0.05$), Navy significantly less	-

			voluntary PT employment **Compared to women in general population** - S/Ps NILF 43% vs. 25% women married to civilians - S/Ps more likely to be underemployed by educational mismatch (38% vs 6%), unemployed (12% vs 2%), involuntarily PT (9% vs 2%) - 61% women married to civilians were adequately employed FT vs. 19% S/Ps	significantly less likely to be in voluntary PT (0.136, $p<0.05$) and FT work (-0.152, $p<0.05$) **Children** - S/Ps with children significantly more likely to be NILF (0.495, $p<0.05$), and significantly less likely to be in involuntary PT work (-0.031, $p<0.05$), educational mismatch (-0.109, $p<0.05$) or adequate FT employment (-0.069, $p<0.05$)	likely to be unemployed & Marine significantly less likely to be NILF compared to Army - probability of NILF increased by 74% for highest officer ranks – all ranks significantly higher than lowest rank ($p<0.05$) - compared to lowest rank, officer ranks significantly more likely to be FT employment (-0.114, $p<0.05$) **Deployment** - no significant differences in S/Ps labour force categories if husband deployed for >30 days in past year **Relocation** - no significant differences in the probability of S/Ps being in particular labour force categories if they had relocated	

					in the previous year	
22	Sudom	2010	-	-	**Relocation** 28.7% endorsed that establishing seniority at work and 25.5% endorsed that establishing employment difficult after moving	-
23	Eran-Jona	2011	77% employed	-	**Rank** - 53% S/Ps in FT employment - 66% officer, 49% NCO, 55% combat officer - 24% S/Ps in PT employment - 22% officer, 23% NCO, 23% combat officer - 23% S/Ps unemployed -16% officer, 28% NCO, 22% of combat officer	-
24	Miller, Meadows et al	2011	S/Ps FT employed 32.4%, PT 16.5%, FT students 11.8%, PT students 7.0% (remainder not stated)	-	**Deployment** - 48% endorsed no problems with employment during deployment - 44% endorsed worse employment problems during	-

					deployment – 9% better **Relocation** - 47.4% endorsed recent move as employment problem - S/Ps living on base significantly less likely to endorse working FT than S/Ps who lived off base (25.8 vs 47.4 percent) (significance not reported)	
25	Heaton and Krull	2012	38.81% employed FT, PT 11.82%, unemployed 6.93%, NILF 42.44% - compared to women married to civilians FT employment 62.37%, PT 11.63%, unemployed 5.09%, NILF 20.91%	-	-	-
26	Blue Star Families	2013	39% employed	-	**Relocation** - 28% state relocation was reason for not working	-
27	Hosek, Wadsworth et al	2013	**Compared to women married to civilians**	-	-	-

			- S/Ps 9% less likely to participate in labour force, 10% less likely to work FT, 14% less likely to work 33 or more weeks/year – work on average 6.4 weeks less			
28	Blue Star Families	2014	24% employed FT, 19% PT	-	-	-
29	Maury and Stone	2014	39.86% employed FT , PT 20.61%, multiple jobs 6.63%, unemployed 32.90% **Compared to women married to civilians** - average gap in yearly unemployment rates between S/Ps and women in general population were 18-24 years (13.06%), 25-44 years (5.10%),	**Children** - unemployment increases with increasing number of children under 18 years (0 children 28.32, 5 children 57.14) - greater effect than seen among women in general population with same number of children (0 children 5.02, 5 children 8.76) **Education** -unemployment rate decreases with increasing levels of	**Rank** - 51.05% of officers S/Ps underemployed, 62.77% of enlisted **Serving status** - S/Ps of active duty personnel 1.474 times more likely to be unemployed compared to S/Ps of veterans (unadj., no CI) **Relocation** - unemployment rates across urban/rural centres differ from	-

			45+(1.96%) – for 18-44 year unemployment rate trend increased from 2000 -2012	educational achievement (high school diploma 40.43% compared with 28.57% for professional degree)	29.71%/year in large urban centres to 40.18%/year in rural areas - Difference more pronounced for enlisted rank S/PS than officers	
30	Military One Source	2014	40% employed, 13% unemployed, 35% NILF, 12% in Armed Forces, 25% unemployment - 40% NILF want to stay home with children (53% officer ranks) - 25% of those working PT could only find PT work	**Age, children and education** - S/P unemployment higher among (OR adj. for service, paygrade, gender, age, education, ethnicity, CI & p not reported, 95% CI over/under 1) - **< 26 Years** (34%) - 1 to 5 Years of Marriage (28%) - **With Children** (27%) - **No College** (36%), **some College** (28%)	**Service and rank** - S/P unemployment higher among (OR adj. for service, paygrade, gender, age, education, ethnicity, CI & p not reported but 95% CI over/under 1) - Army (28%) & lower ranks E1-E4 (33%) **Deployment** - 58% endorsed no employment problems, 16% endorsed major employment problems during most recent deployment, 26% endorsed small-moderate problems – no difference by	-

					Service or rank - Deployment associated with decreases in unemployment (adj. OR=0.64, 95% CI not stated, significant at p<0.05) - multiple deployments in past year (adj. OR=0.79, 95% CI not stated, significant at p<0.05) **Relocation** - relocation in past year associated with higher unemployment compared to those who did not move (38% vs. 25%) - cumulative effect (adj. OR=2.04, 1-2 moves adj. OR=1.28, 3+ moves adj. OR=1.36, 95% CIs not stated, significant at p<0.05)	

NB FT=full-time employment PT=part-time NILF=not in labour force (not working, not looking for work) SATP=stay at home parent

Table 2: Literature review articles - prevalence of depression among S/Ps, comparisons with women in the general population and associated factors

No.	Author	Date	Measure used	Prevalence of depression	Socio-demographic associations	Military factors associations	Associations with mental health
1	Glisson, Melton, et al	1980	Hudson's Generalised Content Scale	-	-	**Deployment** - depression decreased during pre-deployment phase, increasing only once Service personnel had left, rose again 2 weeks prior to return before falling sharply (F quadratic 22.45, p<0.01)	-
2	Thoresen and Goldsmith	1987	Center for Epidemiologic Studies–Depression screener	-	**Finances** - financial well-being correlated with depression (r=-0.47, p=0.008)	-	-
3	Solomon, Waysman et al	1991	Symptom Checklist-90 Revised	-	-	-	**PTSD** - depression associated with S/P relationship with Service personnel PTSD (β=0.30, p<0.05), S/P

							relationship with Service personnel (β=-0.37, p<0.05)
4	Solomon, Waysman et al	1992	Symptom Checklist-90 Revised	-	-	-	**PTSD** - depression significantly higher among S/Ps of Service personnel with CSR (F=7.69, p<0.01), PTSD (F=8.26, p<0.01) compared to S/Ps of Service personnel without CSR or PTSD
5	Kelley	1994	Beck Depression Inventory	-	-	**Deployment** - mean S/P depression scores significantly different according to deployment phase (F 2, 86, =8.79, p<0.001) – scores significantly higher at pre- or mid-deployment than post-deployment (p not stated)	-

						Combat - mean S/P depression scores significantly higher for S/Ps of Service personnel on combat missions as opposed to peacetime deployments ($F(2, 52)=7.80$, $p<0.001$) – significantly higher depression mean scores at pre- or mid-deployment than post-deployment (p not stated)	
6	Rosen	1995	Hopkins Symptom Checklist	34% met criteria for anxiety/ depression symptoms	-	**Rank** - depression/anxiety at T2 predicted by rank ($\beta=-0.21$, $p<0.05$), S/P depression/ anxiety T1 ($\beta=0.304$, $p<0.05$) after adjusting for age, life and deployment events at T1 and T2	-

						Deployment - 70% symptomatic for anxiety/depression symptoms during Operation Desert Storm, 4% symptomatic after soldiers return - depression/anxiety at T1 and T2 predicted by problems during deployment at T1 (β=0.265, p<0.05) and T2 (β=0.132, p<0.05), life events at T2 (β=0.237, p<0.05) after adjusting for age, rank, life and deployment events at T1 and T2	
7	Westman and Vinokur	1998	Hopkins Symptoms Checklist	-	-	-	**Depression** - depression at T1 correlated with depression at T2 (r=0.59, p<0.001),

							undesirable life events at T1 (r=0.43, p<0.01) and T2 (r=0.33, p<0.01) - association between S/P and veteran depression at T1 and T2 not significant after accounting for undesirable life events
8	Westerink, Giarratano et al	1999	GHQ 28 – depression subscale	**Compared to civilians** Mean scores for severe depression higher for Vietnam veteran PTSD than control group (t=3.15, p=0.004)	-	-	-
9	Alessi, Ray, et al	2001	Minnesota Multiphasic Personality	**Compared to women married to civilians**	-	-	-

			Inventory-2	- PTSD of veteran had significantly higher MMPI-2 depressive symptomatology scores compared to women in general population (59.60 vs. 50.07, p<0.005).			
10	Rohall, Hamilton, et al	2001	Symptom Checklist-90 Revised	-	-	**Transition** - PTSD of officers transitioning out of Service had significantly higher mean depression scores (1.71) compared to PTSD of personnel remaining in Service (1.53), employed veterans (1.40), unemployed veterans	-

						(1.50) (p<0.05)	
11	Chartrand, Frank, et al	2008	Centre for Epidemiologic Studies–Depression screener	-	-	**Deployment** - PTSD of deployed Service personnel had borderline significantly higher mean CES-D scores (12.1, SD (9.3) than PTSD of non-deployed Service personnel (9.4 (8.5) (p=0.06)	-
12	Eaton, Hoge, et al	2008	Patient Health Questionnaire – PHQ DSM-IV criteria & strict with PHQ DSM-IV criteria with functional impairment for major depression	12.2% met PHQ DSM-IV criteria 6.7% met strict criteria	-	-	-
13	Renshaw,	2008	Center for	44.9% met	-	-	-

	Rodrigues, et al		Epidemiologic Studies—Depression Scale	criteria of possible clinical depression			
14	Warner, Appenzeller, et al	2009	Patient Health Questionnaire 9	43.7% met criteria for depression (PHQ-9 score ≥10), 24.4% endorsed mild depressive symptoms (PHQ-9 score 5-9) – 10.8% endorsed symptoms of severe depression (PHQ-9 score ≥20)	**Number of children** - depression severity associated with number of children (β=-0.103, p=0.28)	-	**Stress** - 1.21 (95% CI = 1.15-1.27, Wald X 2 = 55.50, df = 1, p<0.001) increase in odds of meeting criteria for moderate or more severe depression with each point increase Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) after adjusting for socio-demographic and military factors **PTSD** - depression severity associated with PSS (β= 0.67, p<0.001)
15	Dursun and Sudom	2009	Center for Epidemiologic Studies–Depression	-	**Employment** - depression significantly higher among S/Ps reporting underemployment/over-	**Work-family conflict** - depression correlated with military-family conflict (r=0.35, p<0.001),	**Mental health** - depression correlated with psychological well-being (r=-0.66, p<0.001)

			screener		qualification/unemployment compared to S/Ps who reported no or some career sacrifices (F=16.75, p<0.001, η=0.02)	family-work conflict (r=0.29, p<0.001), support for spouse's career in AF (r=-0.20, p<0.001) **Deployment** - significantly higher mean depression scores among S/Ps of currently deployed Service personnel compared to S/Ps of never deployed or deployed more than 7 months ago (1.77 vs. 1.56, F=7.74, p<0.001, η=0.01)	**Relationships/support** - depression correlated with life satisfaction (r=-0.56, p<0.001), marital quality (r=-0.32, p<0.001), relationship confidence (r=-0.35, p<0.001), spouse support (r=-0.33, p<0.001)
16	Sudom	2010	Center for Epidemiologic Studies–Depression screener	-	-	**Work-family conflict** - depression correlated with military work & family conflict ((r=0.38, p<0.001), conflict between S/P career and family (r=0.33, p<0.001)	**Mental health** - depression correlated with psychological well-being (r=-0.71, p<0.001), substance abuse (r=0.25, p<0.001) **Relationships/support**

							- depression correlated with emotional support (r=-0.15, p<0.001), family issues during deployment in last 12 months (r=0.46, p<0.001), relationship confidence (r=-0.37, p<0.001), self-efficacy (-0.44, p<0.001), support from family (r=-0.32, p<0.001), friends (r=-0.22, p<0.001), other S/Ps (r=-0.21, p<0.001)
17	Lester, Peterson, et al	2010	Brief Symptom Inventory	**Compared to women married to civilians** - significantly higher mean S/Ps scores for depression than community norms for women (0.49 vs	-	**Deployment** - prevalence of depression not significant by deployment status of Service personnel - deployment duration significant predictor of S/P depression (F(1,162)=7.13, p=0.008), symptoms	-

				0.36, p<0.01)		increased with increasing number of combat months deployed	
18	Mansfield, Kaufman et al	2010	ICD-9 diagnoses of depression	-	-	**Deployment** - depressive disorder – deployed 23.7%, non-deployed 19.1% (sig. not stated) over 3yr period - 39.3 (95% CI 33.2-45.4) excess cases of depression per 1000 in S/Ps of Service personnel deployed for >11 months, 27.4 (95% CI 22.4-32.3) excess cases of depression per 1000 in S/Ps of Service personnel deployed for 1-11 months - compared to S/Ps of non-deployed Service personnel, significantly higher rate ratio of	

						depression outpatient visits in 4 year period for S/Ps of Service personnel deployed for >11 months ((RR)=1.24 (95% CI 1.18-1.31)) & S/Ps of Service personnel deployed for 1-11 months (RR=1.18 (95% CI 1.13-1.23))	
19	O'Toole, Outram, et al	2010	Composite International Diagnostic Interview	3.4% mild depression, 13.9% moderate depression, 13.1% single episode of severe depression, 2.1% recurrent mild depression, 5.9% recurrent moderate depression with and without	**Length of relationship** - moderate depression associated with duration of relationship (OR=0.95 (95% CI 0.91, 0.99).	**Engagement type** - dysthymia associated with regular enlistment (OR=2.72 (95% CI 1.12, 6.63) **Combat** - moderate depression associated with veteran self-reported combat exposure (OR=1.09 (95% CI 1.01, 1.17) - severe depression single	**Veteran mental health** - recurrent mild depression with somatic symptoms associated with veteran recurrent mild depression (OR=2.71 (95% CI 1.30, 5.65), recurrent moderate depression without somatic symptoms associated with veteran combat-related (Clinician-administered PTSD Scale) PTSD (OR=5.62 (95%CI 1.56, 20.52),

				somatic symptoms, 11.8% severe depression without somatic symptoms, 12.7% dysthymia **Compared to women married to civilians** - compared to age-sex match sample of women in the Australian population, relative prevalence of moderate depression 5.03 (95%CI 3.44,		episode associated with battle casualty in Vietnam (OR=5.35 (95% CI 1.58, 18.01)	recurrent severe depression without somatic symptoms associated with veteran recurrent moderate depression with somatic symptoms (OR=1.42 (95% CI 1.03, 1.95) - moderate depression associated with moderate depression single episode with somatic symptoms associated with deployment role (OR=95% CI 1.21 (1.004, 1.47) - dysthymia associated with veteran persistent pain disorder (OR=2.86 (95% CI 1.06, 7.69) - severe depression single

				6.62), severe depression 6.19 (95% CI 4.16, 8.22), recurrent moderate depression without somatic symptoms 24.57 (95% CI 10.39, 38.76), recurrent severe depression without somatic symptoms 32.99 (95% CI 21.52, 44.76), dysthymia 8.77 (95% CI 5.84, 11.70) significantly higher in S/Ps compared to women in			episode associated with veteran recurrent severe depression without somatic symptoms (OR=1.35 (95% CI 1.05, 1.74), veteran agoraphobia without panic (OR=2.54 (95% CI 1.14, 5.68)

				Australian population			
20	Gorman, Blow et al	2011	Beck Depression Inventory	22% met criteria	-	-	-
21	Asbury and Martin	2011	Military Deployment Survey - Depression & items from Depression & Anxiety Stress scale	**Compared to women married to civilians** - no significant differences between mean depression scores of S/Ps (9.37, std. error 0.33 vs. women married to civilians 9.61, std. error 0.42	-	-	-
22	Erbes, Meis, et al	2012a	Patient Health Questionnaire-8 (≥10)	15.3% met criteria	-	**Deployment** - no significance difference in depression according to Service personnel deployment experience	-

						(17% deployed, 14% not deployed)	
23	Faulk, Gloria, et al	2012	Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression scale	-	**Education** - depressive symptoms correlated with education (no college degree, college degree) (r=-0.17, p<0.01)	**Rank, deployment** - depressive symptoms correlated with spousal rank (NCO compared with junior enlisted r=-0.21, p<0.01), number of deployments (r=-0.24, p<0.01)	**Stress** - depressive symptoms correlated with perceived stress (r=0.71, p<0.01), positivity (r=-0.56, p<0.01) - perceived stress (β=0.59, p<0.001), positivity (β=0.39, p<0.001) associated with depressive symptoms – total variance in depressive symptoms 69%, demographic and deployment variables not significant
24	Klaric,, Franciskovic, et al	2012	Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interview	-	-	-	**PTSD** - 37.0% S/Ps of veterans with PTSD met criteria for current depression episode compared to 7.8% S/Ps of veterans without

							PTSD ($X^2(1)=20.65$, $p<0.001$) - 34.4% S/Ps of veterans with PTSD met criteria for past depression episode compared to 3.9% S/Ps of veterans without PTSD ($X^2(1)=24.40$, $p<0.001$), 29.9% S/Ps of veterans with PTSD met criteria depression with melancholic features compared to 3.9% S/Ps of veterans without PTSD ($X^2(1)=19.20$, $p<0.001$), 26.6% S/Ps of veterans with PTSD met criteria for dysthymia compared to 10.4% S/Ps of veterans without PTSD ($X^2(1)=7.15$, $p=0.007$)
25	Knobloch, Ebata,	2013	Mental Health	-	-	**Reintegration**	**Relationships**

	et al		Inventory (MHI-d) depressive symptoms			- depression correlated with reintegration difficulty (0.34, p<0.001) - APIM models found S/P depression associated with men's reintegration difficulty (βs=0.12 to 0.15, p(<0.01))	- depression correlated with relational uncertainty (r=0.34, p<0.001), self-uncertainty (0.32, p<0.001)
26	Blow, Gorman et al	2013	Beck Depression Inventory Second Edition	-	**Relationships** - depression correlated with relationship satisfaction (r=-0.37, p<0/01), parenting stress (r=0.33, p<0.01), family chaos (r=0.36, p<0.01)	-	-

Table 3: Literature review articles - prevalence of PTSD among S/Ps, comparisons with women in the general population and associated factors

No.	Author	Date	Measure used	Prevalence	Socio-demographic associations	Military factors associations	Associations with mental health
1	Gallagher, Riggs, et al	1998	PTSD Checklist – Civilian Version - items with ratings of 3 (moderate) or greater	28% met criteria, all experienced at least 1 traumatic event, 57% reported multiple traumatic events.	-	-	**Veteran PTSD** - veterans with PTSD significantly more likely to have S/Ps with PTSD than those without ($X^2(1) = 8.8$, $p<0.01$)
2	Dirkzwager, Bramsen et al	2005	Self-Rating Inventory for PTSD	-	-	-	**Service personnel PTSD** - S/Ps of peacekeepers without PTSD reported significantly fewer PTSD symptoms than S/Ps of Service personnel with ≥1 PTSD symptoms ($p<0.01$) – no significant difference according to total number of symptoms Service personnel endorsed
3	Franciskovic, Stevanovic et al	2007	Modified Indirect Traumatization	39% met criteria – 32 had 6 or more STS symptoms	**Relationship length** - compared with S/Ps without STS, S/Ps with STS	-	-

			Questionnaire - secondary traumatic stress (STS) corresponding with DSM-IV criteria based on 'moderate' symptoms of ≥2 re-experiencing; ≥3 avoidance, ≥ 2 hyperarousal)		had been married significantly longer (STS=19.1 yrs (± 9.1), no STS=13.2years(± 7.8), p=0.016) and were significantly less likely to be employed (STS=11, no STS=26, p=0.05) **Socio-demographics** - no difference by age, income, education, duration of husband's treatment or number of children or household members		
4	Renshaw, Rodrigues, et al	2008	PCL PTSD Checklist (score ≥44)	12.5% met criteria	-	-	-
5	Dursun and Sudom	2009	Diagnosed psychological disorder during term of	2.9% diagnosed with PTSD during partner's military career	-	-	-

			personnel's' service				
6	O'Toole, Outram, et al	2010	Composite International Diagnostic Interview	**Compared to women in general population** 18.6% PTSD – relative prevalence 7.39 (95% CI 5.42-9.35) compared to age-sex matched population	-	-	**Veteran PTSD** - S/P PTSD associated with non-combat PTSD in veterans (OR 1.42 (95% CI 1.11, 1.82)
7	Sudom	2010	Diagnosed psychological disorder during term of personnel's' service	2.2% diagnosed with PTSD during partner's military career	-	-	-
8	Lester, Peterson, et al	2010	Posttraumatic Diagnostic Scale	-	-	**Deployment** - deployment duration significant predictor of S/P PDS severity (F(1,162)= 6.38, p=0.01); symptoms	-

						increased with number of combat months deployed **Rank** - no significant difference in prevalence of S/Ps meeting PTSS criteria by rank – 14.2% enlisted S/Ps vs. 6% officer S/Ps ($X^2(1)=2.24$, NS)	
9	Mansfield, Kaufman et al	2010	ICD diagnoses of PTSD	-	-	**Deployment** - no significant difference in PTSD diagnosis by Service personnel deployment status (1.4% deployed, 1.1% non-deployed) or number of excess cases by deployment length (1-11 months 0.5 (95% CI −0.7 to 1.7), >11 months 1.3 (95% CI−0.2 to 2.8)) - compared to S/Ps of non-deployed Service	-

						personnel, significantly higher rate ratio of PTSD outpatient visits in 3 year period for S/Ps of Service personnel deployed for >11 months ((RR)= 1.28 (95% CI 1.02 to 1.60)	
10	Gorman, Blow et al	2011	Short Screening Scale for *DSM-IV* PTSD in reference to life event	17% met criteria (life event)	-	-	-
11	Herzog, Everson et al	2011	Secondary Trauma Scale (STS)	14.8% met criteria (score ≥45)	**Education** - STS correlated with S/P education (r=-0.368, p=0.006), Service personnel education (r=-0.450, p=0.001)	**Rank** - STS correlated with enlisted rank (r=-0.364, p=0.001)	**Service personnel PTSD** - STS correlated with Service personnel PCL (r=0.533, p<0.001)
12	Renshaw, Allen, et al	2011	PTSD Checklist–Military Version (PCL-C)	41.6% scored ≥34, 30.5% scored ≥44 – 23.7% endorsed enough criteria at	-	**Military experience** - 62.4% reporting some symptoms indicated responses completely	**S/P psychological distress & PTSD** - correlation of S/P psychological distress

				moderate severity (score ≥3) to meet criteria, of which 21.6% scored ≥44		unrelated to husbands' military experience, 24.7% due to husbands' military experience and experiences in own lives, 12.9% due solely to husbands' military experiences – attribution distribution did not differ according to S/P PCL-C score	with trauma-specific symptoms (intrusive thoughts, nightmares, reliving, physical reactions to memories, avoidance, trouble remembering) (r=0.57) significantly lower than correlations with overall PCL-C scores (r=0.70) (t(165)=5.65, $p<0.$.001) and generic symptoms (loss of interest in activities, trouble sleeping, emotional numbing, irritability, anger, difficulty concentrating, hypervigilance) (r=0.71) (t(163)=-3.20, p<0.01) - interaction between psychological distress and attribution significant

							only for generic symptoms – generic symptoms more strongly associated with distress in S/Ps who partially or completely attributed PTSD symptoms to Service personnel military events (β=0.77, *p*<0.001) compared to S/Ps who attributed symptoms to own experiences (β=0.62, *p*<0.001)
13	Melvin and Gross	2012	PTSD Checklist – Civilian Version (PCL-C) (score ≥30)	34% met criteria - when previous trauma included, 2% (n=1) had STS, other S/Ps had other trauma STS could be attributed to	-	-	**PTSD** - couples with higher PCL scores predicted significantly lower dyadic adjustment scores (z=-2.82, 95%CI (-0.17,-0.03), p=0.005)
14	Wolf, Miller, et al	2012	Clinician Administered	20% met criteria for current PTSD,	-	-	-

			PTSD Scale (CAPS) – DSM-IV criteria	38% for lifetime prevalence			
15	Erbes, Meis, et al	2012a	PTSD Checklist – Civilian Version (PCL-C) (score ≥49 and 'moderate' symptoms of ≥1 re-experiencing; ≥3 avoidance, ≥ 2 hyperarousal)	2.4% met criteria	-	**Deployment** - 3% S/Ps of Service personnel with experience of deployment met criteria compared with 2% of those with no prior experience – not significant	-
16	McGuire, Runge et al	2012	PTSD Checklist – Civilian Version (PCL-C) (score ≥50)	<5% met criteria (% not stated)	-	**Deployment** - 4.3% S/Ps of deployed Service personnel met criteria compared to 5.3% S/Ps of non-deployed Service personnel (p=0.31)	-
17	Klaric,, Franciskovic, et al	2012	Harvard Trauma Questionnaire (HTQ) (score > 2.5)	-	-	-	**Veteran PTSD** - 40.3% S/Ps of veterans with PTSD met criteria for PTSD compared to 6.5% S/Ps of veterans without

							PTSD, 58.4% S/Ps of veterans with PTSD had PTSD symptoms present but no PTSD compared to 84.4% S/Ps of veterans without PTSD, 1.3% of S/Ps of veterans with PTSD had no PTSD symptoms compared to 9.1% S/Ps of veterans without PTSD ($X^2(2)=33.34$, $p<0.001$) - significantly higher mean number/scores for total number of traumatic events, PTSD symptom, self-perception of functionality and total score of traumatic symptoms among S/Ps of veterans with PTSD than S/Ps of those without

							PTSD (all p<0.001)
18	Hoyt and Renshaw	2013	PTSD Checklist–Military Version (PCL-M) (score ≥50)	8.8% met criteria at T1, 11.3% at T2, not significant	-	**Combat** - S/P scores correlated with S/P reports of veteran combat exposure at T1 (r=0.28, p<0.05) and T2 (r=0.39, p<0.01)	-
19	Blow, Gorman et al	2013	Sample 1: Short Screening Scale for DSM–IV PTSD, Sample 2: PTSD Checklist-Civilian Version (PCL-C)	-	-	-	**Service personnel PTSD** - S/P PTSD correlated with Service personnel PTSD (r=0.13, p<0.01), S/P alcohol misuse (r=0.29, p<0.01), S/P depression (r=0.57, p<0.01) **Relationships** - S/P PTSD correlated with relationship satisfaction (r=-0.25, p<0/01) but not significant predictor in models (p>0.05)

Table 4: Literature review articles - prevalence of alcohol misuse among S/Ps, comparisons with women in the general population and associated factors

No.	Author	Year	Alcohol use measure	Prevalence	Socio-demographic associations	Military factors associations	Associations with mental health
1	Jordan, Marmar et al	1992	Brief MAST score ≥6 "probable alcoholic"	-	-	-	**PTSD** 6.7% S/Ps of veterans without PTSD, 6.6% S/Ps of veterans with PTSD
2	Johnson, Harsha et al	1993	At least one alcoholic drink per week	-	-	**Rank** 20.7% S/Ps of Service personnel in lowest ranks have one alcoholic drink per week, 46.1% S/Ps of majors & colonels & 7.7% S/Ps of warrant officers	-
3	Haddock, Poston et al	1995	Estimated beer & liquor consumption per month	2% heavy drinkers (60+ drinks per month or 2 drinks/day)	-	**Rank** Increasing alcohol consumption correlated with increasing military rank of retired Service personnel (r=0.20, p<0.001)	-
4	Grant, Scherrer	2005	Telephone	12% diagnosed	-	-	-

	et al		diagnostic interview	with lifetime alcohol dependence			
5	Mansfield, Kaufman et al	2010	ICD-9 diagnosis of alcohol misuse (abuse and dependence)	-	-	**Deployment** 1.1% S/Ps of deployed Service personnel and 0.8% of S/Ps of non-deployed Service personnel had ICD-9 diagnosis 3.1 (95% CI 1.6-4.5) excesses cases of alcohol misuse per 1000 in S/Ps of Service personnel deployed for >11 months, 1.1 (0.0 to 2.2) deployed for 1-11 months, not significant	-
6	Padden, Connors et al	2011	Multidimensional Health behaviour Inventory (MHBI)	75.0% never drink ≥5 alcoholic drinks in session, 12.4%	**Socio-demographics** Substance abuse not associated with demographics	**Deployment** Substance abuse not associated with deployment or stress	**Stress** Substance abuse not associated with stress

				rarely, 10.5% sometimes, 1.9% often			
7	Gorman, Blow et al	2011	Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) (scores ≥8)	3% S/Ps met criteria	-	-	-
8	Erbes, Meis et al	2012a	Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) (scores 8-15=hazardous use, ≥16=harmful)	3.2% S/Ps met criteria for hazardous use, 0.5% harmful	-	**Deployment** 3% S/Ps with no prior deployment experience met criteria for hazardous use, 1% for harmful use; 4% S/Ps with no prior deployment experience met criteria for hazardous use, 0% for harmful use	**Service personnel alcohol use** Alcohol misuse between National Guard couples correlated (r=0.368, p<0.001)
9	McGuire, Runge et al	2012	Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT)	-	-	**Deployment** 9.8% S/Ps of deployed Service personnel met criteria for hazardous	**Service personnel mental health** Service personnel alcohol misuse (AUDIT ≥16)

			(scores 8-15=hazardous use, ≥16=harmful)			use, 2.5% for harmful compared with 8.9% S/Ps and 0.4% of non-deployed Service personnel respectively. Not significant	associated with alcohol misuse in S/Ps (AUDIT ≥16) (OR=13.99 (95% CI 4.12, 47.49, p<0.001 (n S/Ps=11)) Service personnel psychological distress (K10) associated with alcohol misuse in S/Ps (AUDIT ≥16) (K10 16-29 OR=6.73 (95% CI= 1.39, 32.63) p=0.02 (n S/Ps=7), (K10 30-50 OR=9.98 (95% CI=1.38-72.31) p=0.02, (n S/Ps=2)) Service personnel PTSD (PCL-C) associated with alcohol misuse in S/Ps (AUDIT ≥16) (PCL-C 30-49 OR=3.83 (95% CI=0.77-19.14), p=0.10 (n S/Ps=3), PCL-C50-85 OR=12.96 (95% CI=2.84-59.26), p=0.001, (n

							S/Ps=4)
10	Blow, Gorman et al	2013	Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) (scores ≥8)	10.7% S/Ps met criteria	**Age, children** Younger, unmarried S/Ps without children more likely to meet criteria (% not stated) **Family stress** Drinking configurations not associated with S/P parenting stress, family chaos)	-	**Service personnel alcohol use** AUDIT scores S/Ps and Service personnel correlated (r=0.27, p<0.01) 68.4% couples non-hazardous concordant alcohol use (neither met criteria), 26.2% discrepant (one met criteria), 5.4% concordant for hazardous use (both met criteria)
11	Miller, Reardon et al	2013	Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-IV (SCID-IV)	6% S/Ps reported symptoms of alcohol abuse	-	-	Veteran and partner alcohol abuse correlated (r=0.48, p=0.01)

Table 5: Literature review articles - prevalence of marital satisfaction among S/Ps, comparisons with women in the general population and associated factors

No.	Author	Date	Measure used	Prevalence	Socio-demographic associations	Military factors associations	Associations with mental health
1	Glisson, Melton et al	1980	Index of Marital Satisfaction	-	-	**Deployment** - marital satisfaction over the deployment cycle decreased in 3 weeks after husband left and at highest 1 week prior to departure and after return (F 1, 36)=5.82, p<0.05)	-
2	Bowen	1983	Marital Quality Scale	-	**Gender roles** - couples in which Service personnel held traditional views of gender-roles & S/Ps modern views had higher mean marital quality scores indicating less positive evaluation of relationship,	-	-

					significantly higher than couples where both members held either same views ($p<0.05$).Significant after adjusting for rank, S/P employment, family cycle		
3	Bowen	1985	Questions on overall satisfaction with quality of marital interaction, frequency of disagreements, and ability to resolve disagreements	-	**Ethnicity** - no significant differences in S/Ps marital satisfaction by ethnicity after controlling for base location, stage in the family life, and rank	-	-
4	Bowen	1987	Composite measure of marital	-	-	**Rank, employment & location** - significant interactions	-

			adjustment comprising intimacy, communication, disagreements and satisfaction			between S/P employment, location and rank for marital intimacy (F2,648=3.73, p=0.02) - lowest marital intimacy scores among officer S/Ps in US working FT, highest among S/Ps employed PT and married to US based officers (not reported) - S/Ps of officers employed fulltime and living overseas had higher marital intimacy scores than those employed part-time or not employed (not reported) - employed S/Ps of enlisted Service personnel, especially part-time and living in US based had lower marital	

						intimacy scores than those not employed (not reported)	
5	Thoresen and Goldsmith	1987	Marital Satisfaction Scale	-	**Finances** - marital satisfaction correlated with financial well-being (r=0.3675, p<0.05)	-	-
6	Martin and Ickovics	1987	21 items from 48-item marital satisfaction scale	-	-	**Military life** - marital stress at T1 correlated with military life stress at T2 (r=0.223, p<0.01) - general well-being at T2 affected by military life stress for first-term S/Ps (total effects -0.7071) and marital stress at T1 for cadre S/Ps (-0.8896)	**Well-being & marital stress** - S/P marital stress at T1 correlated with general well-being at T1 (r=-0.506, p<0.01), marital stress at T2 (r=0.635, p<0.01), and general well-being at T2 (r=-0.185, p<0.01) - S/P marital stress at T2 correlated with marital stress at T1 (r=0.613, p<0.01), general well-being at T1 (r=-0.266, p<0.01), general well-being at T2 (r=-0.538, p<0.01) - No significant difference in marital stress over time points for first term

							or cadre S/Ps
7	Bowen	1989	Marital Quality Scale	-	**Gender roles** - gender-role congruence not correlated with S/P marital quality **Children** - S/P marital quality predicted by presence of children (β=0.08, p<0.05)	-	-
8	Rosen, Ickovics et al	1990	Martin scale based on Roach et al	-	**Role satisfaction** - marital satisfaction correlated with role satisfaction (r=0.34, p<0.001), financial satisfaction (r=0.32, p<0.001), career satisfaction (r=0.17, p<0.001), role fit (r=-0.11, p<0.001)	-	**Well-being** - S/P marital satisfaction correlated with general well-being (r=0.47, p<0.001)

					- marital satisfaction associated with role satisfaction (β=0.194, p<0.001)		
9	Rosen and Moghadam	1991	Martin scale based on Roach et al	-	**Education** - marital satisfaction correlated with S/P education (r=0.19, p<0.001) **Role satisfaction** - marital satisfaction correlated with S/P mastery (r=0.48, p<0.001), role satisfaction (r=0.37, p<0.001), financial satisfaction (r=0.28, p<0.01) **Family support**	-	**Well-being** - S/P marital satisfaction correlated with S/P general well-being at T1 and T2 (r=0.49, 0.37, p<0.01), - after excluding well-being at T1, marital satisfaction associated with well-being at T2 (β=0.388, p<0.05) after controlling for other variables – not significant if well-being at T1 included

					- marital satisfaction correlated with S/P family support (r=0.25, p<0.001)		
10	Jordan, Marmar et al	1992	Marital Problems Index (MPI), adapted from various validated measures	-	-	-	**Service personnel PTSD** - 40.1% S/Ps of veterans with PTSD reported high levels of marital problems compared to 18.8% S/Ps of veterans without PTSD - S/Ps of veterans with PTSD report significantly higher mean MPI (Marital Problems Index) scores (2.37) than S/Ps of veterans without PTSD (1.96) ($X^2(1)=14.0$, p<0.001)
11	Solomon, Waysman et al	1992	Interviews judged & scored for marital intimacy in 5 areas (feelings, social activities, sexual relations,	-	**Family life/relationships** - marital satisfaction correlated with marital intimacy (r=0.71, p<0.01), conflict (r=-0.65, p<0.01),	-	**Service personnel PTSD** - S/Ps of Service personnel with CSR had significantly lower mean scores for marital satisfaction than S/Ps of Service personnel without CSR (F(1,77)=6.04, p<0.05) before and after war and at time of survey (F(3,

			ideas & intellectual interests, leisure activities)		expressiveness (r=0.52, p<0.01), cohesion (r=0.54, p<0.01), integration (r=0.59, p<0.01), consensus (0.48, p<0.01), family boundaries (r=-0.58, p<0.01)		161)=5.29, p<0.01)
12	Pittman	1994	Questions on marital tension (non-validated)	-	-	**Work-family conflict** - marital tension predicted by S/P view of Service personnel work/ family fit (β=-0.137, p<0.05) – actual work hours played no role	**Service personnel marital satisfaction** - S/P marital tension correlated Service personnel marital tension (r=0.60, p<0.01) – significant predictor in structural equation model (β=0.348, p<0.05)
13	Medway, Davis et al	1995	Relationship Assessment Scale	-	-	-	**Life disruption, social support** - study 1 - relationship satisfaction correlated with life disruption (r=0.22, p<0.05), social support group (r=0.29, p<0.01), interaction of two (r=-0.33, p<0.001)

							- study 2 - relationship satisfaction correlated with life disruption (r=0.23, p<0.01), attachment security (r=0.22, p<0.01), personal distress (r=0.17, p<0.05) - for those with children, relationship satisfaction correlated with life disruption (r=0.24, p<0.01), attachment security (r=0.26, p<0.01), child separation problems (r=-0.26, p<0.01), child reunion problems (r=-0.37, p<0.001), personal distress (r=0.20, p<0.05)
14	Paulus, Nagar, et al	1996	Non-validated measures of marital harmony	-	-	-	**Lifestyle stressors** - S/P marital harmony correlated with morale (r=0.32, p<0.01), lifestyle problems (friendships, finances, transport, family, job demands, health etc.) (r=0.25, p<0.01) - marital harmony predicted by

							housing problems (B=-0.23, p<0.05), lifestyle problems (B=0.38, p<0.001)
15	Schumm, Bell et al	1996	Questions on relationships following deployment	-	-	-	**Life stressors** - S/P marital stability and time predict marital satisfaction– life stressors during deployment (pregnancy, death, poor communication) not always predictors of marital satisfaction even if marital stability was low before deployment
16	Hendrix, Erdmann et al	1998	Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale	-	-	-	**Service personnel PTSD** - S/P marital satisfaction correlated with veteran self-reported arousal (r=-0.39, p<0.005) & avoidance (r=-0.34, p<0.01) - S/P marital satisfaction predicted by S/P perceived family cohesion (β=0.44, p<0.001), veteran arousal (β =-0.21, p<0.05)
17	Riggs, Byrne et	1998	Dyadic	-	-	-	**Service personnel PTSD**

	al		Adjustment Scale (DAS)				- 71% S/Ps of veterans with PTSD met criteria for relationship distress compared to 36% S/Ps of veterans without PTSD ($X^2(1)=7.35$, $p<0.01$) - S/Ps veterans with PTSD had significantly lower mean DAS scores (92.7) compared to S/Ps veterans without PTSD ((105.5) ($F(1, 47)=17.54$, $p<0.001$)) - S/P DAS correlated with veteran PTSD avoidance ($r=-0.43$, $p<0.01$), re-experiencing ($r=-0.31$, $p<0.05$), arousal ($r=-0.37$, $p<0.01$) symptoms but not predicted with any one cluster in regression models ($p>0.05$) - correlated with, ($r=-0.39$, $p<0.01$) and predicted by, ($\beta=-0.41$, $p<0.05$) veteran emotional numbing
18	Taft, King et al	1999	Marital Problems Index (MPI)	-	-	-	**Service personnel PTSD & marital satisfaction** - S/P marital problems correlated

							with veteran marital problems (r=0.53, p<0.001), veteran PTSD (r=0.31, p<0.001), S/Ps scores of veteran PTSD (r=0.59, p<0.001)
19	Westman, Vinokur et al	2004	Six-item scale derived from Dyadic Adjustment scale	-	-	-	**Service personnel distress** - at T1, S/P marital dissatisfaction correlated with Service personnel distress (r=0.09, p<0.01), S/P distress (r=0.25, p<0.01). - at T2, S/P marital dissatisfaction correlated with Service personnel distress at T2 (r=0.20, p<0.01), S/P distress at T2 (r=0.37, p<0.01), Service personnel marital dissatisfaction at T1 (r=0.15, p<0.05) and T2 (r=0.60, p<0.01) - S/P marital dissatisfaction predicted by Service personnel marital dissatisfaction (β=0.58, p<0.05), financial hardship (β=0.08,

							p<0.05)
20	Dirkzwager, Bramsen et al	2005	Maudsley Marital Questionnaire (score ≥20)	19% met criteria for problematic relationship	-	-	**Service personnel PTSD** - 16% S/Ps of peacekeepers without PTSD met criteria for problematic relationship, increasing to 26%, 24% and 39% in relation to peacekeepers endorsing 1, 2 or 3 PTSD symptoms respectively ($X^2(3)=11.53$, p<0.01) - S/P mean scores significantly higher for S/Ps of peacekeepers with ≥1 PTSD symptoms compared to S/Ps of peacekeepers with no symptoms (p<0.05) - S/P marital quality correlated with peacekeeper PTSD symptom severity (r=0.26, p<0.01), PTSD intrusion (r=0.20, p<0.01), PTSD avoidance (r=0.26, p<0.01), PTSD hyperarousal (r=0.26, p<0.01), sleeping problems (r=0.33, p<0.01),

							somatic problems (r=0.26, p<0.01), positive social support (r=-0.39, p<0.01), negative social support (r=0.36, p<0.01)
21	Dekel, Solomon et al	2005	Dyadic Adjustment Scale	-	- mean DAS score (M=71.8, SD=27.19) significantly lower than DAS cut-off of 98 (t(215)=11.84, p<0.001)	-	**Veteran distress** - S/P marital distress correlated with veterans' emotional distress (r=-0.50, p<0.001), functional disability (r=-0.25, p<0.01), S/P burden (r=-0.63, p<0.001) & S/P emotional distress (r=-0.56, p<0.001) - veteran mental distress had direct effect on S/P marital satisfaction (r=-0.21), indirect effect through S/P burden (r=-0.65) (significance not stated)

22	Burrell, Adams et al	2006a	Quality of Married Index	-	**Age** - marital satisfaction associated with age (β=-0.19, p<0.01) after adjusting for number of separations, impact of separations, Service personnel rank, number of moves, S/P fear for soldier safety, impact of moving and impact of foreign residence	**Military separation** - marital satisfaction correlated with impact of separations (r=-0.15, p<0.01), army life satisfaction (r=0.20, p<0.01) - marital satisfaction associated with number of separations (β=0.12, p<0.05), impact of separations (β=-0.17, p<0.01) in regression models after adjusting for S/P age, Service personnel rank, number of moves, S/P fear for soldier safety, impact of moving and impact of foreign residence **Relocation**	-

						- not significantly associated with S/Ps marital satisfaction	
23	Nelson Goff, Crow et al	2007	Dyadic Adjustment Scale	-	-	-	**Service personnel marital satisfaction & PTSD** - S/P & Service personnel DAS correlated (r=0.66, p<0.001). S/P DAS correlated with Service personnel Trauma Symptom Checklist (TSC-40) scores (r=-0.32, p<0.05), dissociation (r=--0.46, p<0.01) & anxiety (r=-0.42, p<0.01) subscales - dissociation & sexual abuse/problems were significant predictors of S/P DAS (R^2=0.26, adjusted R^2=0.23, F(2, 41)=7.28, p<0.01)

							- Service personnel TSC-40 scores associated with S/P marital satisfaction (R^2=0.11, adjusted R^2=0.09, F(1, 42)= 5.23, p<0.05) after adjusting for other variables
24	Renshaw, Rodrigues et al	2008	Relationship Assessment Scale (scores ≤3-3.5)	16.7% of S/Ps met criteria	-	**Combat** - marital satisfaction not correlated with combat exposure or S/P perceptions of combat exposure	**Service personnel marital satisfaction, depression & PTSD** - S/P marital satisfaction correlated with Service personnel marital satisfaction (r=0.51, p<0.001), Service personnel self-reported depressive symptoms (r=-0.36, p<0.05), S/P self-reported depression (r=0.47, p<0.001), S/P perceptions of soldier depression (r=-0.56, p≤0.001) & PTSD symptoms (r=-0.33, p<0.05) - marital satisfaction associated with S/P self-reported depression (Service personnel PTSD part r=-0.53, p<0.001, Service personnel

							depression part r=-0.50, p<0.001), S/P perceptions of combat exposure (both part r=0.38, p<0.01), Service personnel psychological symptoms (Service personnel PTSD part r=-0.35, p<0.01, Service personnel depression part r=-0.40, p<0.001) - mediated by S/P perceptions of combat exposure – if perception low, S/P marital satisfaction associated with Service personnel reports of PTSD (part r=-0.46, p <0.001) & depressive symptoms (part r=-0.48, p<0.001). If exposure perceived as high, associations is not significant for Service personnel reports of PTSD or depressive symptoms
25	Hamilton, Nelson Goff et al	2009	Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)	-	-	-	**Service personnel marital satisfaction & PTSD** - DAS scores correlated with Service personnel DAS (r=0.66, p<0.001),

							S/P PTSD symptoms (Trauma Scale Checklist-40 (TSC-40) r=-0.44, p<0.01, S/P Purdue Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Scale-Revised (PPTSD-R) r=-0.48, p<0.001), S/P PPTSD-R subscales of re-experiencing (r=-0.45, p<0.01), avoidance (r=-0.43, p<0.01) & arousal (r=-0.44, p<0.01) - S/P re-experiencing PPTSD-R subscale scores associated with S/P relationship satisfaction (R^2 =0.15, adj. R^2=0.13, F (1,41)=7.43, p <0.01)
26	Dursun and Sudom	2009	Quality of Marriage Index	-	**Life stressors** - marital quality correlated with S/P life satisfaction (r=0.46, p<0.001), trouble between children & parents (r=-0.17, p<0.001) & measures of	**Deployment** - marital quality did not differ across deployment cycle	**Service personnel marital satisfaction & PTSD** - marital quality correlated with S/P depression (r=-0.32, p<0.001), S/P psychological well-being (r=0.25, p<0.001)

					work-family conflict (r=-0.17-0.22, p<0.001)		
27	Allen, Rhoades et al	2010	Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale	-	**Communication** - marital satisfaction correlated with negative communication (r=-0.62, p<0.001), positive bonding (r=0.83, p<0.001), parenting alliance (r=0.56, p<0.001)	-	**Service personnel PTSD** - marital satisfaction correlated with Service personnel PTSD symptoms (r=-0.27, p<0.001) - negative communication (B=-0.12, p<0.01) & positive bonding (B=0.74, p<0.001) explained association between PTSD & S/P marital satisfaction
28	Joseph and Afifi	2010	Quality of Marriage Index	-	**Communication** - marital satisfaction correlated with disclosure (r=0.35, p<0.01), social support from Service personnel (r=0.78, p<0.01)	**Military social support** - marital satisfaction correlated with perceived available military social support (r=0.35, p<0.01)	-

					- disclosure predicted marital satisfaction after controlling for the amount of communication within couples (β=0.32, p<0.001)		
29	Renshaw, Rodebaugh et al	2010	Marital Problems Index (MPI)	-	-	-	**Service personnel PTSD** - MPI correlated with veteran self-report of PTSD (r=0.18, p,0.05), S/P perceptions of veteran PTSD (r=0.54, p<0.001), S/P psychological distress (r=0.60, p<0.001), S/P physical complaints (r=0.31, p<0.001) - MPI predicted by veteran self-report PTSD (β-0.22, p<0.05), S/P perceptions of veteran PTSD (β=0.67, p<.001), mediated by veteran self-reported PTSD (β=0.58,

							p<0.001), and S/P psychological distress (β=0.41, p<0.001)
30	Asbury and Martin	2011	Military Deployment Survey	**Compared to women married to civilians** - mean for marital discord scores significantly higher for S/Ps than women in general population (t(119)=-3.217, p<0.05) – consistent after controlling	-	-	-

				for age and number of children 80% S/Ps frequently considered divorce compared to 17% women married to civilians			
31	Chandra, Lara-Cinisomo et al	2011	Daily hassles scale	-	-	**Deployment** - S/Ps reporting a current deployment reported fewer relationship problems (F(1, 1931)=10.7, p<0.001) **Engagement type** - reserve S/Ps (F(1,	**Well-being** - S/Ps experiencing poorer emotional well-being reported more relationship problems (F(1, 1931=348.3, p<0.001)

						1931)=9.7, p<0.001) reported more relationship problems	
32	Klaric, Franciskovic et al	2011	Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)	-	-	-	**PTSD** - S/P mean DAS scores significantly lower for couples where one or both members has PTSD compared to S/Ps in couples with no PTSD (F=39.17, p<0.001) - marital satisfaction associated with S/P re-experiencing (β=0.251, p<0.05), Service personnel avoidance (β=-0.346, p<0.01), S/P depression (β=-0.231, p<0.05) - S/P and Service personnel PTSD symptom clusters, hostility and depression explain 33.8% of S/P marital satisfaction
33	Campbell and Renshaw	2012	Marital Problems Index (MPI)	-	-	-	**PTSD** - MPI scores correlated with veteran PTSD (r=0.32, p<0.001), S/P

							psychological distress (r=0.60, p<0.001), general communication (r=-0.60, p<0.001), Vietnam-specific communication (r=-0.19, p<0.001) - MPI predicted by general communication (β=-0.56, p<0.001), veteran PTSD (β=0.19, p<0.001)
34	Erbes, Meis et al	2012b	Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)	-	-	-	**Marital distress** - DAS at T1 correlated with DAS at T2 (r=0.82, p<0.001) - 33% of couples had one or both members meeting DAS criteria for marital distress at T1, 52% at T2 - significant decrease in scores between T1 & T2 (increasing distress) (t(45)=4.74, p<0.001) - Service personnel PTSD symptoms at T1 predicted lower S/P marital satisfaction (β=-0.20, p=0.025)

35	Renshaw and Caska	2012	1. Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) 2. Marital Problems Index (MPI)	-	-	-	**PTSD** <u>Study 1</u> - relationship satisfaction correlated with S/P perceptions of Service personnel symptoms of avoidance ($r=0.27$, $p<0.001$), numbing ($r=0.38$, $p<0.001$), re-experiencing ($r=0.18$, $p<0.01$), hyperarousal ($r=0.32$, $p<0.001$), S/P psychological distress ($r=0.40$, $p<0.001$) - path model of three PTSD clusters found S/P relationship satisfaction associated with S/P perceptions of Service personnel hyperarousal ($\beta=0.22$, $p<0.05$), avoidance/numbing ($\beta=0.36$, $p<0.001$), re-experiencing ($\beta=-0.23$, $p<0.05$) - path model of four PTSD clusters found S/P relationship satisfaction associated with S/P perceptions of

							Service personnel re-experiencing (β=-0.19, p<0.05), numbing (β=0.31, p<0.001) <u>Study 2</u> - MPI correlated with S/P psychological distress (r=0.60, p<0.001), perceived veteran re-experiencing/situational avoidance (r=0.42, p<0.001), withdrawal/numbing (r=0.60, p<0.001), arousal/lack of control (r=0.59, p<0.001) - path model of three PTSD clusters found arousal/lack of control (r=0.40, p<0.01), withdrawal/numbing (r=0.48, p<0.001) & re-experiencing/situational avoidance (r=-0.27, p<0.05) associated with S/P relationship satisfaction

36	Blue Star Families	2013	Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI)	86% of S/Ps happy or very happy in relationship	-	-	-
37	Campbell and Renshaw	2013	Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) (scores ≤3.5)	24.4% met criteria	-	-	**Service personnel marital satisfaction** - relationship satisfaction correlated with Service personnel relationship satisfaction (r=0.52, p<0.001), partner report of emotional disclosure (r=0.55, p<0.001) - model 1 - S/P relationship satisfaction at T2 associated with Service personnel relationship satisfaction at T2 (β=0.54, p<0.001), Service personnel total PTSD severity at T1 (β=-0.32, p<0.01) - model 2 - S/P relationship satisfaction at T2 associated with

							S/P emotional disclosure (β=0.42, p<0.001), in turn associated with Service personnel numbing symptoms (β=0-.27, p<0.001) (73% of overall indirect effect, p=0.07)
38	Blow, Gorman et al	2013	Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale	-	-	-	**Service personnel marital satisfaction** - marital satisfaction correlated between S/Ps and Service personnel (r=0.59, p<0.01) **PTSD** - marital satisfaction correlated with S/P PTSD (r=-0.25, p<0.01) , S/P depression (r=-0.37, p<0.01), Service personnel PTSD (r=-0.26, p<0.001) Service personnel AUDIT (r=-0.21, p<0.01), Service personnel depression (r=-0.33, p<0.01), lower parenting stress (r=-0.30, p<0.01), family chaos (r=-0.44, p<0.01)

							- marital satisfaction associated with S/P and Service personnel depression (B=-0.54, B=-0.36, both p<0.01), S/P and Service personnel parenting stress (B=0.45, B=0.41, both p<0.01), S/P and Service personnel family chaos (B=0.37, p<0.01, B=0.25, p<0.05), AUDIT not significant - no sig diffs in S/P marital satisfaction according to congruency of alcohol use in couples
39	Borelli, Sbarra et al	2013	Dyadic Adjustment Scale Short Form (DAS-4)	-	-	**Deployment** - significant decrease in DAS-4 mean scores from T1 (pre-deployment) to T2 (during deployment) (t(36)=13.37, p<0.001) and from T1 to T3 (post-deployment) (t(19)=9.40, p<0.001) – no difference between T2 and T3	-

						- relationship satisfaction at any time not correlated with number of previous deployments or length of deployment	
40	Bergmann, Renshaw et al	2014	Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale	38% couples met criteria	-	-	**Service personnel marital satisfaction** - marital satisfaction correlated with Service personnel marital satisfaction (r=0.54, p<0.001), S/P meaningfulness of work (work-family balance and deployment readiness) (r=0.17, p<0.001), Service personnel PTSD (r=-0.24, p<0.001) **PTSD** - marital satisfaction predicted by S/P meaningfulness of work (perceptions of work-family balance and readiness for deployment (β=0.15, p<0.001), Service personnel

							PTSD (β=-0.23, p<0.001)
41	Blue Star Families	2014	Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI)	80% of S/Ps happy, very or extremely happy in relationship	-	-	-
42	Monk, Goff et al	2014	Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)	-	-	-	**Service personnel marital satisfaction & PTSD** - S/P and Service personnel DAS scores correlated (r=0.77, p<0.01, r=0.51, p<0.05 for high and low/mixed-disclosure groups respectively) - S/P PTSD correlated with S/P DAS (r=0.43, p<0.05; r= 0.63, p<0.01 for high and low/mixed-disclosure groups respectively), correlated with Service personnel DAS scores in high disclosure couples only (r=0.43, p<0.05)

							- Relationship quality predicted by S/P trauma (high β=-0.83, p<0.001, low/mixed β=-0.46, p<0.001), Service personnel DAS (high β=0.70, p<0.001, low/mixed β=-0.46, p<0.001)
43	Andres	2014	ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale	-	**Social support & relationships** - relationship satisfaction at T3 associated with social support at T2 (β=0.18, p<0.05), spouse interaction at T3 (β=0.42, p<0.001), work-family conflict at T1 (β=-0.23, p<0.05)	**Deployment** - 19% less satisfied with relationship after separation from deployment of 4-6 months, 10% more satisfied - mean scores for relationship satisfaction high both prior to deployment and after deployment (not reported) but decreased significantly over time	**Well-being** - S/P relationship satisfaction at T3 associated with psychological distress at T3 (β=-0.39, p<0.001)

						(t(131) = 7.20, p<0.001) **Work-family conflict** - relationship satisfaction at T3 associated with work-family conflict at T1 (β=-0.23, p<0.05)	
44	MacDonell, Thorsteinsson et al	2014	Dyadic Adjustment 7 (DAS-7)	-	**Life stressors** - DAS correlated with S/P life satisfaction (r=0.63, p<0.01), sleep (r=-0.22, p<0.01), social isolation (r=-0.36, p<0.01), financial problems (r=-0.32, p<0.01), intimacy problems, (r=-0.88, p<0.01), exhaustion (r=-0.52, p<0.01)	-	**Psychological distress & PTSD** - DAS correlated with S/P psychological distress (r=0.57, p<0.01), veteran PTSD (r=-0.17, p<0.05) - association between veteran PTSD and S/P relationship satisfaction mediated by intimacy problems (b=-3.67, p<0.001)

45	Renshaw, Allen et al	2014a	Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale	-	-	-	**Service personnel PTSD** - S/P marital satisfaction correlated with S/P perceptions of Service personnel PTSD (r=-0.36, p<0.001), re-experiencing (r=-0.26, p<0.001), avoidance (r=-0.33, p<0.001), emotional numbing/ withdrawal (r=-0.44, p<0.001) & hyperarousal symptoms (r=-0.30, p<0.001)
46	Renshaw, Campbell et al	2014b	Marital Problems Index (MPI)	-	-	-	**Service personnel PTSD** - S/P MPI correlated with veteran re-experiencing (r=0.23, p<0.01), emotional numbing and withdrawal (r=0.33, p<0.001), arousal and lack of control (r=0.27, p<0.001), veteran MPI (r=0.49, p<0.001) - S/P MPI predicted by veteran emotional numbing and withdrawal (b=0.32, p<0.001)

Chapter 3 – Thesis rationale, theoretical approach and aims

This chapter discusses the rationale and mixed methods approach of this thesis, outlines the main aims and objectives and details the theoretical underpinnings of this thesis.

Rationale

As highlighted in the literature review for this thesis, there were relatively few estimates of employment, mental health and marital satisfaction among spouses and partners (S/Ps) of Service personnel. Few studies had examined the influences of social or military factors. Estimates that were available involved different participant groups and were conducted at differing points of the deployment cycle, making it difficult to determine the baseline prevalence. There were no robust published UK estimates of the mental health and well-being of this population in the literature reviews. Even the total number of S/Ps is unclear as data regarding Service family members is not routinely collected by the Ministry of Defence and is voluntarily supplied by personnel (Head of Defence Statistics (Tri Service) 2014). However, with more than 170,000 regular and reserve Armed Forces personnel (Ministry of Defence 2014c), of whom two-thirds are married or co-habiting (Keeling 2014), there are estimated to be approximately 100, 000 S/Ps in the UK. While international studies provided some indication of prevalence and associated factors, it cannot be assumed that these are applicable in a UK context given differences in military structure and culture. Annual Ministry of Defence and Service family federation[3] surveys of military families are conducted (Ministry of Defence 2013), but these do not collect a wide range of information on S/P mental health and well-being and the low response rates (typically less than 50%) raise concerns about the representativeness of the findings. **This thesis aims to address the gaps in this literature by estimating the prevalence of employment, mental health, alcohol misuse and marital satisfaction among S/Ps of UK Service personnel and examining social and military factors associated with these outcomes.**

Qualitative studies have been important in understanding the experiences and perceptions of UK S/Ps during military relocation (Jervis 2011, Blakely, Hennessy et al. 2014b); these relocations are referred to as *accompanied postings* in the UK Armed Forces and this term will be used throughout this thesis. However, both of these studies (Jervis 2011, Blakely, Hennessy et al. 2014b) have been limited to the experiences and perceptions of S/Ps on overseas accompanied postings. With the recent closure of overseas military bases in Germany and

[3] For examples, see www.aff.org.uk/aff_in_action/aff_surveys.htm

establishment of large 'super-garrisons' within the UK, such experiences may no longer be as pertinent to current or future S/Ps. To expand the research on the influences of accompanied postings on the well-being of UK S/Ps (Jervis 2011, Blakely, Hennessy et al. 2014b) and to build on previous qualitative research among international S/Ps (Harrison and Laliberte 1994, Harrell 2001, Higate and Cameron 2004, Runge, Waller et al. 2014), a qualitative study was conducted. **This aimed to provide detailed descriptions of S/P experiences of employment, marital relations and social networks during accompanied postings and their relationship with the military institution and to explore how these experiences influenced S/P well-being.**

Key to this area of research is the current UK policy context which provides a legislative impetus to improve understanding of the mental health and well-being of S/Ps. Unique to the UK, the Armed Forces Covenant *"encapsulates the moral obligation to those who serve, have served, their families and the bereaved"*. Introduced into UK legislation under the 2011 Armed Forces Act, the Covenant provides a policy framework by which to support current and former Service personnel and their families, such that they face no disadvantage in the provision of services and, under certain circumstances, may require special consideration above civilians (Ministry of Defence 2016a). The Armed Forces Families' Strategy 2016-2020 also addresses many of the areas explored in this thesis (Ministry of Defence 2016c), including S/P employment, health and well-being and community support. However, this policy context is currently lacking in an evidence-base.

As well as this policy framework, understanding the mental health and well-being of S/Ps is important to ensure that NHS commissioning boards with a remit for Service families, as well as NHS England, Service charities and policy makers, have the best data to improve current provision and address need. These outcomes are also important for the Armed Forces themselves in terms of recruitment, retention and operational effectiveness, as well as the duty of care the military has towards Service family members. Perceptions of difficulties at home during deployment have been shown to influence the mental health of deployed personnel (Mulligan, Jones et al. 2012) and women who are more satisfied with military life, particularly the ability to pursue their desired career or employment, are more likely to support personnel remaining in Service (Jolly 1987, Scarville 1990, Rosen and Durand 1995b, Lakhani and Hoover 1997).

Use of mixed methods

This thesis employs a mixed methods approach to exploring the mental health and well-being of S/Ps. Mixed methods studies either seek to triangulate and corroborate findings between

studies, complement another study by exploring different but related aspects of a phenomena or concept, develop studies by using methods sequentially to build on findings, initiate the discovery of contradiction, or expand the breadth of research by exploring different areas with different methods (Greene, Caracelli et al. 1989, Caracelli and Greene 1993). This approach can help to alleviate the weaknesses that are characteristic of both quantitative and qualitative research (Creswell and Clark 2011); qualitative studies can provide context and setting to quantitative data and quantitative data can reduce questions about potential biases in the interpretation of qualitative data and generalisability to large populations. Another benefit described by Creswell and Clark is that mixed methods allows researchers to answer questions that are not necessarily solely quantitative or qualitative, freeing them to explore issues more widely.

Where possible, Bazeley recommends mixed methods studies should integrate not only the findings of the different components of a study but also the design and analysis in order to produce stronger conclusions (Bazeley 2012). This thesis follows this recommendation by using the quantitative-qualitative priority-sequence model outlined by Morgan (Morgan 1998), where a smaller qualitative study is used to interpret the findings from a larger, initial quantitative study. It also falls within the development mixed methods design described by Greene et al (Greene, Caracelli et al. 1989), where the findings from one study (in this case, the quantitative study) are used to inform the development of another methodology (the qualitative study). This is in part, because the quantitative data were available at the commencement of this thesis and therefore this data was analysed first. However, the qualitative study was developed with the explicit intention of exploring aspects of the quantitative findings in greater detail and context. In particular, I wanted to explore S/Ps experiences of employment and marital satisfaction during accompanied postings, as well as of their relationship with the military institution, and how these influenced well-being. Although developed at separate times and with differing levels of input from me, the studies were intended to inform each other to increase the validity of the overall thesis and the findings were intended to be considered together rather than independently. Further details of how this was achieved are provided in the qualitative methods section (Chapter 11, p237).

Aims and objectives

The primary aim of this thesis was to explore the mental health and well-being of spouses and partners (S/Ps) of UK Service personnel. The main aim was comprised of objectives grouped under four themes; the first three were addressed using quantitative methodologies and the

fourth addressed using qualitative methodologies. The thesis chapters and objectives are outlined in Figure 5.

Objective 1: Socio-demographic and military profile of S/Ps

- To describe the sample of UK S/Ps according to their socio-demographics (e.g. age, number of children, residence) and the military characteristics of Service personnel (e.g. Service, rank, serving/ex-serving)

Objective 2: S/P employment

- To estimate the prevalence of employment among UK S/Ps and compare with the prevalence among women in the general population
- To examine socio-demographic and military factors associated with employment among UK S/Ps

Objective 3: Mental health, alcohol misuse and marital satisfaction among S/Ps

- To estimate the prevalence of mental health (probable depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)), alcohol misuse and marital satisfaction among UK S/Ps and compare with the prevalence among women in the general population
- To examine socio-demographic and military factors associated with mental health, alcohol misuse and marital satisfaction among UK S/Ps
- To examine associations between the marital satisfaction of UK S/Ps and the mental health of military couples

Objective 4: Accompanied postings and the influences on S/P well-being

- To describe the employment, marital relations and social network experiences of UK S/Ps during accompanied postings (military relocation) and their relationship with the military institution
- To explore how S/Ps experiences during accompanied postings and with the military institution influence the well-being of UK S/Ps
- To explore similarities and differences in these influences between S/Ps of officers and non-officer ranks
- To explore how transition out of Service influences the well-being of UK S/Ps

Figure 5: Overview of thesis objectives and associated chapters

Chp 5	Obj.1	– to describe the socio-demographic and military profile of UK S/Ps
Chp 6	Obj.2	– to estimate the prevalence of, and factors associated with, employment among UK S/Ps
Chp 7, 8	Obj.3	– to estimate the prevalence of, and factors associated with, mental health outcomes (probable depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), alcohol misuse and marital satisfaction among UK S/Ps
Chp 11	Obj.4	– to describe UK S/P experiences of employment, marital relations and social networks during accompanied postings, as well as their relationship with the military institution, and explore how these experiences influence well-being

Theoretical approach

Mental health and well-being

As this thesis is concerned with not only the mental health of women in a relationship with UK Service personnel but also their well-being, an understanding and definition of well-being and its interconnection with mental health, and how these concepts were used in this thesis, is needed.

Definitions and measurement of well-being

Although regularly discussed and mentioned in research and policy documents, conceptually, well-being remains somewhat of a nebulous construct, with differing definitions across research areas and disciplines.

While objective well-being is largely tied to factors such as income and living standards that can be measured using indicators of quality of life (work/life balance and social connections) and material living conditions (income, earnings and employment) (OECD 2011), subjective well-being is more difficult to define given its nature and theoretical differences in its conception. Definitions of subjective well-being are largely divided into either hedonic or eudemonic schools of thought according to perceptions about the fundamental underpinning of what well-being is. Hedonic well-being, influenced by the work of Ed Diener, is based on ideas of happiness and pleasure (Ryan and Deci 2001) and focuses on life satisfaction, the presence of positive long-term emotions and the absence of negative mood (Diener, Suh et al. 1999, Diener 2000). This captures *emotional well-being*. Eudemonic well-being expands on these ideas of positive emotions by including references to personnel development such as a

person being able to fulfil their true self and be challenged to grow and develop as a person (Ryan and Deci 2001). The eudemonic school of thought, as described by the work of Carol Ryff, focuses on *psychological* or mental well-being, which moves beyond the presence or absence of positive emotional states to address six separate domains of positive *psychological well-being*; self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal growth (Ryff 1989, Ryff and Singer 1996).

Although the hedonic and eudemonic traditions define subjective well-being in different ways, and as such, lend themselves to different research methods, there is evidence of overlap in the approaches they employ (Gallagher, Lopez et al. 2009, Weich, Brugha et al. 2011, Vanhoutte 2014). As such, a more appropriate way of defining subjective well-being may be by using wider definitions of well-being that have emerged in recent years that encompass both hedonic and eudemonic traditions and may be a truer reflection of the two continua model of mental health. Combining these two approaches allows well-being to be broadly described as encompassing factors including positive relations with others, autonomy, purpose in life, personal growth (Ryff 1989), social support and relationships (Larson 1993), satisfaction with life, long-term good emotions and an absence of unpleasant emotions (Diener 2000).

Well-being policy context in the UK

UK policy-makers have widely adopted broader definitions of well-being that encompass both hedonic and eudemonic traditions. Similar definitions embracing well-being as both positive emotions as well as personal fulfilment have been adopted in white papers, policy documents and health research programmes from the UK Department of Health and Scottish and Welsh parliaments (Department of Health (UK) 2010, Blackaby, Drinkwater et al. 2012, The Scottish Government 2014) and by the Royal College of Psychiatrists (Royal College of Psychiatrists 2014). The most succinct of these broader definitions is by Aked et al (Aked, Marks et al. 2008), who describe well-being as *"feeling good and functioning well".*

The UK Faculty of Public Health (FPH) (UK Faculty of Public Health 2010) defines mental well-being within these two traditions as the capacity of individuals to:

- realise their abilities, live a life with purpose and meaning, make a positive contribution to communities
- form positive relationships with others, and feel connected and supported
- experience peace of mind, contentment, happiness and joy, cope with life's ups and downs and be confident and resilient
- take responsibility for oneself and for others as appropriate

The FPH also links mental well-being with social well-being, although social well-being is described in terms of social and income equality, social capital, social connectedness and social networks rather than defined; reference is made to the role hierarchical power within communities and the role of authoritarian structures play in collective mental well-being(UK Faculty of Public Health 2010).

The link between mental health and well-being

The two continua model of mental wellness and illness outlines the relationship between mental illness and mental health as the existence of two separate but related constructs (Westerhof and Keyes 2010). Under this model, wellness is described using the terminology of well-being; feeling *"positive and enthusiastic about life.... [including] the capacity to manage one's feelings and related behaviours…. [and the] development of autonomy and ability to cope effectively with stress"* with illness defined as the *"absence or presence of disease"* (Manderscheid, Ryff et al. 2010). Keyes and colleagues developed this model further by explicitly constructing mental health as comprised of three forms of well-being – emotional, psychological and social – all symptoms of mental health and related to, but distinct, from mental illness (Keyes 2005, Keyes 2007). This model provides a theoretical link between the quantitative measures of S/P mental health and qualitative assessments of influences on S/P well-being; mental health was defined as endorsement or *caseness* of validated measures of psychological disorders and this was hypothesised to be linked with, albeit separate to, the well-being explored in the qualitative study.

This model is reflected in the terminology used in the definition of mental health used by a number of health agencies, both internationally and within the UK. Rather than merely the absence of illness, the World Health Organisation (WHO) defines mental health (World Health Organisation 2014):

> *"a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community"*

This definition expressly links mental health to elements of well-being such as autonomy, mastery, purpose and connectedness as previously described. Both the UK Department of Health and Royal College of Psychiatrists make similar connections between the two concepts (Royal College of Psychiatrists 2010, Department of Health (UK) 2013), as does

the UK Government's Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Well-being (Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project 2008):

Definition of mental health and well-being used in this thesis

The definition of mental health and well-being used in this thesis drew on the two continua model of wellness and illness, as demonstrated in the WHO definition of mental health, and UK policy definitions of well-being. Mental health refers to the absence of mental well-being and is determined by S/P caseness according to validated measures of mental health – depression and PTSD. Employment and marital satisfaction were considered to be outcomes associated with mental health and linked to well-being.

While emotional states are central to mental health and well-being, previous research of S/Ps has shown issues of identity and autonomy can be important factors in the well-being of this population as well (Segal 1986, Jervis 2011, Blakely, Hennessy et al. 2012c). It was therefore appropriate, that for the purposes of this thesis, well-being was conceptualised according to wider public health definitions encompassing hedonic traditions of positive emotions and life satisfaction as well as eudemonic principles of fulfilment, purpose in life and good social relationships that are linked with definitions of mental health. Well-being was defined throughout this thesis in accordance with the UK Government's Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Well-being definition of mental well-being (Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project 2008):

> *"… [to be] able to develop their potential, work productively and creatively, build strong and positive relationships with others, and contribute to their community…"*

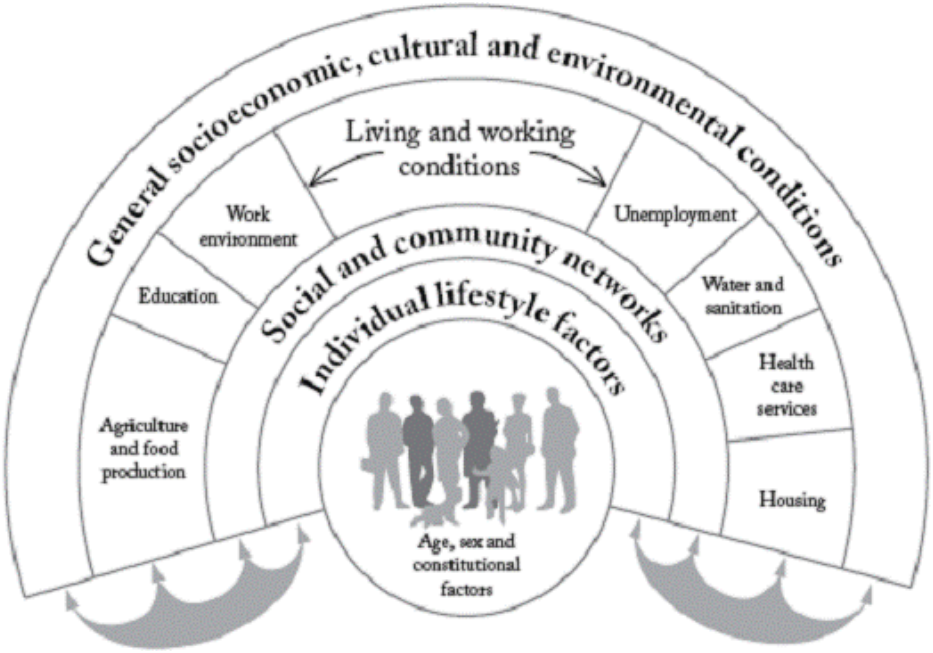
The use of this definition was intended to identify and explore areas that are influential in well-being (potential, employment, social networks) and to align the research findings from this thesis with current UK mental health policy as well as definitions of mental health and well-being from the WHO.

Social determinants approach

The main theory used to inform this thesis was a social determinants approach to S/P mental health and well-being based on the Dahlgren and Whitehead model of health (Dahlgren and Whitehead 1991). Commonly used as an underpinning theory in public health research, Dahlgren and Whitehead's model postulates health is influenced by different layers of interacting domains (Figure 6). Health is not only influenced by inherent biological factors but

by *"individual lifestyles… embedded in social norms and networks, and in living and working conditions, which in turn are related to the wider socioeconomic and cultural environment"* (Dahlgren and Whitehead 2007)**.**

Figure 6: Dahlgren's and Whitehead's social determinants model of health



Source: Dahlgren and Whitehead, 2007, p20

At the core of the model are individual and biological factors which are largely fixed, such as age and sex. Surrounding this core are various layers of influence that affect health. The first of these are individual lifestyle factors, such as health behaviours like tobacco or alcohol use. The second represents the interactions and relationships people have with others in their social networks, families and communities and the third refers to living and working conditions. Overarching and influencing all of these domains are the wider socio-economic, cultural and environmental conditions under which people live. Key to this model is that these layers should be not considered individually but rather as a series of interacting pathways to mental health and well-being. Such interactions can result in positive or negative effects, for example in providing accessible and affordable health services or by reducing employment and therefore financial security.

Although primarily a model of health, I used this theory as the main theoretical approach for this thesis to provide an overarching exploratory model of influences on the mental health and well-being of UK S/Ps. In particular, it draws on the connections between social and mental well-being as discussed in the previous section on well-being and health and the broad

approach allows for the combination of data from mixed methodologies. Informed by the findings of the literature reviews, this model encompassed my contention that the mental health and well-being of UK S/Ps would be influenced by:

- *individual factors* – such as age, health behaviours, individual personality
- *community factors* – such as relationships with family members, friends and other S/Ps, being a parent, community organisations, Service personnel rank
- *employment conditions* – such as availability and access to employment, un/underemployment, education and training
- *socio-economic, cultural and environmental factors* – such as the military institution and military, including accompanied postings, deployment and combat

Other similar theories of health exist, such as the life course approach, of which a model applicable to military life has been proposed (Segal, Lane et al. 2015). This theory considers how the cumulative experiences of people influence their health over their lifetime, including events during childhood, establishing a significant relationship, giving birth, joining the military, deployment, accompanied postings and transition. Although this model would have encompassed many of the same influences on the mental health and well-being of S/Ps, it was not chosen as the primary theoretical approach for this thesis due to the cross-sectional, rather than longitudinal, nature of the quantitative data and the lack of data on childhood outcomes of S/Ps.

Self-determination theory

While a social determinants approach proposes an overall framework for exploring how various aspects of employment, family life, social networks and wider military culture influence S/P mental health and well-being, it does not explicitly address issues of identity or personal agency, such as perceptions of autonomy and mastery, that are particularly pertinent in the qualitative component of this thesis and described in the literature (Harrison and Laliberte 1994, Horn 2010, Enloe 2016). I therefore draw upon self-determination theory to propose a psychological mechanism that explains how the mental health and well-being of S/Ps is influenced by their perceived experiences of military life. Measuring such factors is not possible within the quantitative work and therefore this theory is more applicable to the qualitative component.

As well as covering important elements of potential well-being for S/Ps, self-determination theory was chosen in part as it allows for reflection on the diversity of influences on mental health and well-being. While S/Ps may experience the same influences on health from the

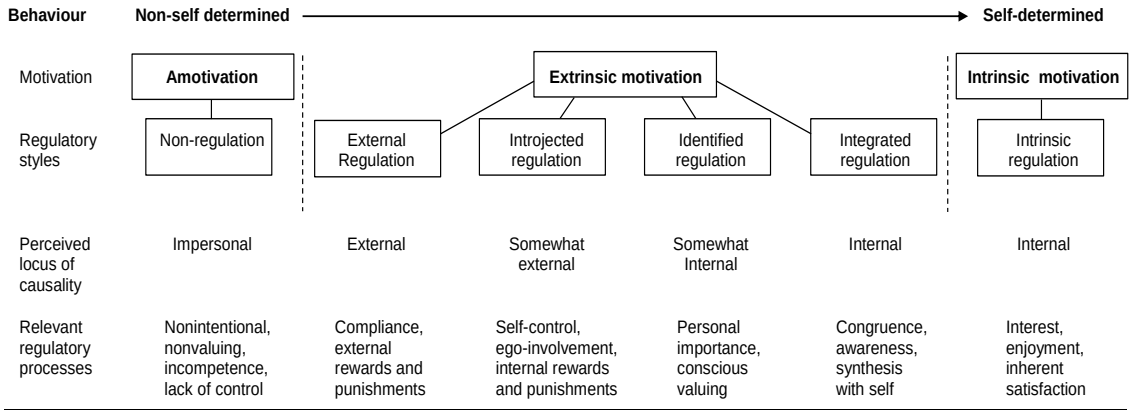
various layers of social determinants, not every S/P will be affected in the same way by the same experiences, and changing life circumstances mean that even the same S/P may react differently to a repeated experience at a later time. Factoring this into the theoretical approach allows for a more detailed exploration of the ways in which the mental health and well-being of individual S/Ps is influenced by social determinants as well as their own motivations within the context of the military.

Developed by Ryan and Deci et al (Ryan and Deci 2000a), self-determination theory considers how intrinsic (doing something because it is interesting) and extrinsic (doing something because it leads to a particular outcome) motivation influences human behaviour. Ryan and Deci identified three "needs" instrumental to optimal functioning and well-being under intrinsic motivation: competence/self-efficacy, relatedness (connectedness) and autonomy (agency) – these needs also align with elements of well-being. Social environments that facilitate or block intrinsic motivation are postulated to negatively affect mental health and well-being as failure to balance these aspects has been shown to lead to negative impacts on well-being and psychological health (Ryan and Deci 2000a). Tasks or behaviours performed under intrinsic motivation, where people conduct tasks solely for the satisfaction they bring, results in higher interest, performance and persistence, self-esteem and well-being than tasks motivated extrinsically, or through external influences, even with the same level of ability or competence (Ryan and Deci 2000a). However, few activities are intrinsically motivated due to increasing social demands as people age.

Rather than providing satisfaction or pleasure on completion, activities performed under extrinsic motivation are a means of achieving a particular outcome of interest rather than the task itself. An example of this is the completion of homework, which students complete under varying degrees of external pressure and sanction. These external factors can have differing influences on the autonomy, and therefore well-being, of those responding to them (Ryan and Deci 2000a, Ryan and Deci 2000b). Among S/Ps, extrinsic motivations may include pressure to participate in community activities, negotiating expectations regarding the behaviour of S/Ps and decisions regarding children's' schooling. How people become motivated to take on such tasks or behaviours depends on whether people accept the values and regulation of the requested behaviour (*internalisation*) and whether this is further transformed in such a way that it eventually incorporated into their sense of self (*integration*). The interplay between internalisation and integration and the perceived internal or external locus of control moderate motivation and behaviour. The effects range from non-self-determined or amotivation, where little or no value is placed on an activity, through to full self-determination

or intrinsic motivation (Ryan and Deci 2000a). Between these extremes are various forms of extrinsic motivation that modify behaviour from coercion to acceptance and assimilation with individual values and needs (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Self-determination Theory – Continuum of Motivation



Adapted from Ryan and Deci, 2000 p 72

Combining a social determinants approach and self-determination theory

These two theoretical approaches were used to address different aspects of this thesis. The social determinants approach was used as an overarching framework through which to examine the quantitative and qualitative findings. This allowed me to combine the various outcomes and approaches used in this thesis to explore various layers of influences on the mental health and well-being of S/Ps – from individual health behaviours to social networks, employment and wider cultural factors and the interaction between these layers of effect. Self-determination theory was drawn upon to provide a psychological explanation for exploring how intrinsic and extrinsic motivations may influence the mental health and well-being of S/Ps within a military context. This theory was applied to the qualitative findings.

Chapter 4 – Quantitative methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology for the qualitative component of this thesis. The chapter begins by describing the recruitment of the sample, the measures of mental health and well-being and the analytical procedures used.

Description of sample

Data from spouses and partners of Service personnel (S/Ps) come from the King's Centre for Military Health Research (KCMHR) Children of Military Fathers' study. The main aim of the Children of Military Fathers' study was to investigate the impact of PTSD on military families (Iversen, Fear et al. 2014). Data on military characteristics and mental health outcomes were collected from Service personnel (fathers), socio-demographics and mental health outcomes were collected from female spouses and partners (mothers) and behavioural outcomes were measured among children. Ethical approval for the Children of Military Fathers' study was granted by the Ministry of Defence Research Ethics Committee and the King's College Hospital Research Ethics Committee (NHS REC reference: 08/H0808/27).

Recruitment

Service personnel for the Children of Military Fathers' study were identified from the KCMHR health and well-being cohort, a two-phase follow-up study of deployable UK Armed Forces personnel established in 2003 to examine the health and well-being of personnel deployed to Iraq (Hotopf, Hull et al. 2006, Fear, Jones et al. 2010). Recruitment at phase 1 (baseline) included full-time serving, personnel who had left Service by the time the survey was completed and reserve personnel (oversampled 2:1 compared with regulars) deployed to the first phase of combat of the Iraq war between January and April 2003 (n=4722, response rate 62.3%). A comparison group of those serving but not deployed (ERA sample) during the same time period was also recruited (n=5550, response rate 56.3%). An overall response rate of 59% was achieved at phase 1.

Participants for phase 2 (follow-up) included 3 samples; a sample of Service personnel followed up from the initial study (n=6429, response rate 68%); personnel deployed to Afghanistan (HERRICK sample) between April 2006 and April 2007 (n=2665, response rate 50%); and a replenishment sample of those who had joined the Armed Forces between 2003-2007, of which reserves were oversampled 3:1 (n=896, response rate 40%) (Fear, Jones et al. 2010). The two latter samples were included to ensure that the age and rank structure of the cohort represented the overall structure of the UK Armed Forces and that the sample included

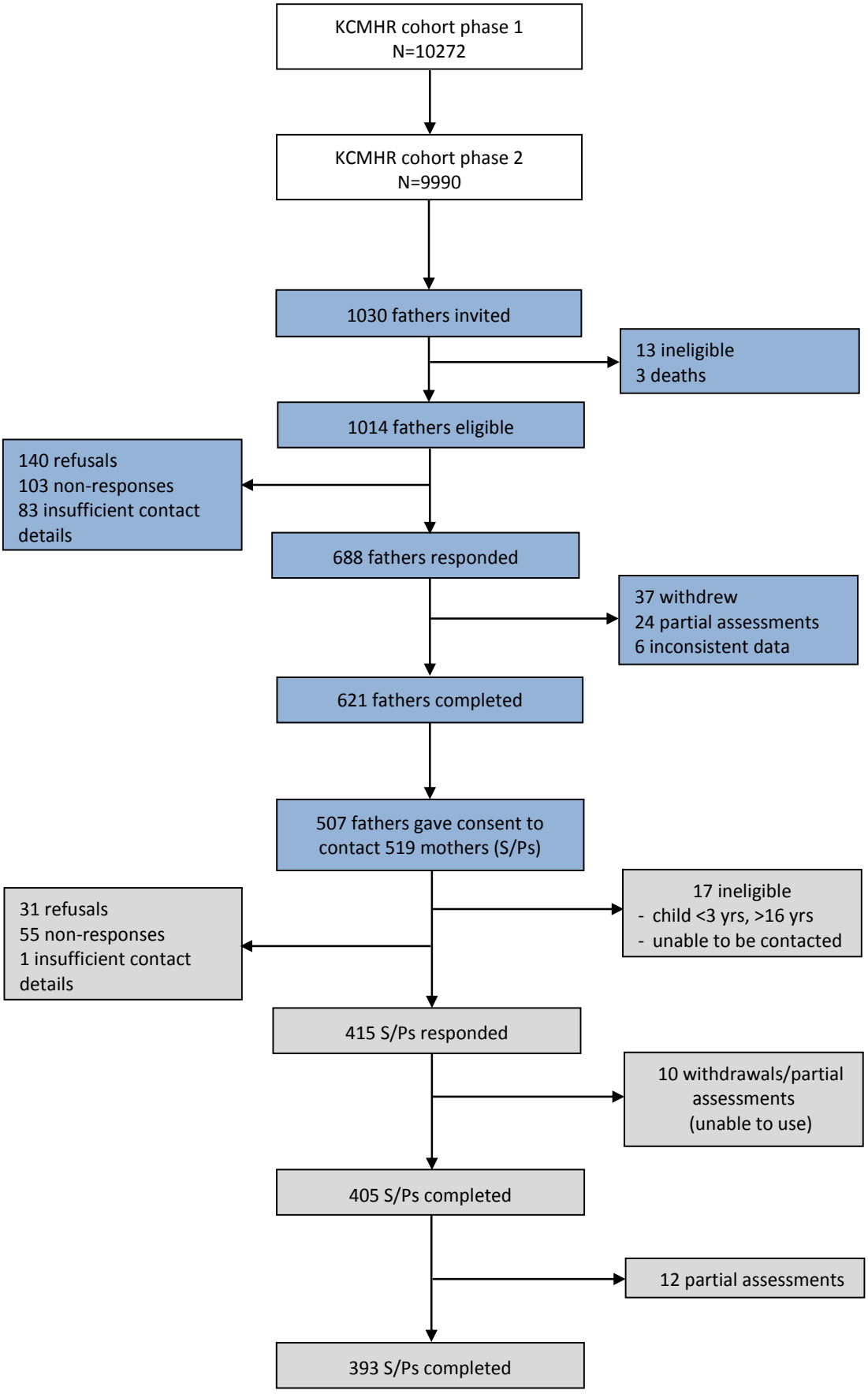
personnel deployed on operations in Afghanistan (HERRICK). The overall response rate at phase 2 was 56% (n=9986). During both phases, thorough and extensive efforts were made to contact non-responders (by post, base visits and telephone tracing). The final sample was representative of the personnel structure of the deployable UK Armed Forces at the time of selection (Defence Statistics 2013b).

Service personnel who had one or more children aged 3-16 years at phase 2 were eligible to take part. The age of children was restricted to 3-16 years due to the child well-being measures used in this study. Two groups of Service personnel from phase 2 were invited to take part in the Children of Military Fathers' study. The first comprised regular or reserve personnel who met PTSD caseness (score ≥50) using the PTSD Checklist – Civilian Version (PCL-C) or borderline caseness (score 40-49) criteria for PTSD or those who were positive for at least two of three symptom cluster domains of the PCL-C. The second group was comprised of military fathers who scored <40 on the PCL-C. Data collection took place between July 2010 and October 2012.

Fathers were invited in batches to complete online and telephone interviews which collected information on the following:

- Service information
  - Most recent deployment
  - Engagement type - regular or reserve
  - Ex-Service status - if they had left service or not and reasons for leaving
  - Separation from children
- Mental health
  - Probable depression – Patient Health Questionnaire 9 items (PHQ-9) (Kroenke, Spitzer et al. 2001)
  - Probable PTSD – Posttraumatic Checklist - Civilian Form (PCL-C) (Weathers, Litz et al. 1993)
  - Alcohol misuse - Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) (Babor, Higgins-Biddle et al. 2001)
  - Relationship adjustment – Dyadic Adjustment Scale 7 items (DAS-7) (Spanier 1976, Sharpley and Rogers 1984)

Figure 8: Flow diagram of participants in the quantitative study



1030 military fathers were invited to participate. Of these, 86 could not be followed up due to death or insufficient contact details and 13 were ineligible due to their child's age. The final sample size was 931. A total of 621 fathers completed the survey (response rate of 66.7%), of which 507 (81.6%) gave consent for the mothers of their children to be contacted (Figure 8).

As some Service personnel gave contact details for multiple mothers of their children, 519 mothers were contacted to take part in the study. Of the mothers contacted to take part in the Children of Military Fathers' study, 87 refused, did not respond or had insufficient contact details. Of the remainder, 17 were ineligible due to the age of their child being outside the 3-16 year range or because they were not able to be contacted once the study began. 415 women completed the online survey, following which 10 fathers or mothers withdrew consent or partially completed the survey to the extent that their data was not able to be used.

A total of 405 women completed (n=393) or partially completed (n=12) the mothers survey and provided the sample for this thesis – this represents a response rate of 78.0%. S/Ps who provided partial information were included in analyses where possible. Four fathers had multiple mothers respond (one current and one former partner).

In light of the primary data source, in this thesis 'spouses and partners' (S/Ps) explicitly refers to data from **women with children in a current or former relationship with UK Service personnel**.

Outcome measures

Quantitative estimates of well-being were determined using recommended indicators, including S/P employment and deprivation. Mental health was assessed using validated measures of probable depression and PTSD. Alcohol misuse was considered as a mental health outcome for the purposes of this thesis, although aspects of alcohol consumption such as binge-drinking were considered to be indicative of health behaviours. Marital satisfaction was considered to be separate from, but related to, the mental health of S/Ps given the associations with depression and PTSD in the literature (Chapter 2, p47).

Measures of mental health

In this thesis, mental health was measured using validated questionnaires for probable depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), alcohol misuse and marital satisfaction outcomes of S/Ps. Data was missing for 11 S/Ps who did not complete these measurements.

Probable depression and functional impairment

Probable depression caseness was assessed using the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9). The PHQ was originally developed from the Primary Care Evaluation of Mental Disorders (PRIME-MD) measure, a self-administered measure which used to estimate the presence of depression, anxiety, somatoform, alcohol misuse and eating disorders among respondents (Spitzer, Kroenke et al. 1999).

The shorter PHQ-9 is comprised of 9 items covering mood, concentration, sleeping, diet and behaviour in the previous 2 week period (Kroenke, Spitzer et al. 2001, Kroenke and Spitzer 2002, Löwe, Unutzer et al. 2004). Each item is a 5-point Likert scale indicating how much participants have been bothered by certain problems in the last month, with response options from 'Not at all (0)' to 'Nearly every day (3)'. Total scores range from 0 to 27, with higher scores indicating greater depression symptomology. It has been validated in primary care samples in the UK (Gilbody, Richards et al. 2007).

Caseness criteria

a. Probable depression

Probable depression caseness was assessed using the recommended PHQ-9 score cut-off of ≥10 (Kroenke and Spitzer 2002):

- ≥5-≤9 – mild depression
- ≥10-≤14 – moderate depression
- ≥15-≤19 – moderately severe depression
- ≥20 – severe depression

Due to a low number of cases, PHQ-9 scores were used as a continuous variable in some analyses. The PHQ-9 can also be used to assess probable depression caseness using an algorithm aligned with specific DSM-IV criteria (Kroenke, Spitzer et al. 2001) which requires participants to endorse particular symptoms. However, the lower sensitivity of this method in comparison to the a score cut-off of ≥10 meant this option was not selected (Manea, Gilbody et al. 2015).

b. Impaired function

A follow-up question was included after the PHQ-9 on self-reported functional impairment to estimate how probable depression impacted on experiences of everyday life. This was assessed via one question on how depression symptoms may have affected work, taking care

of things at home or managing personal relationships using a 4-point Likert scale from 'Not difficult at all (1)' to 'Extremely difficult (5)'.

S/Ps who endorsed any of the PHQ-9 items for at least several days in the last 2 weeks were asked to complete this question – this question was not applicable to 91 respondents. S/Ps who met PHQ-9 criteria for probable moderate or severe depression were considered to be experiencing function impairment if they reported their experiences of everyday life were somewhat, very or extremely difficult because of probable depression symptoms.

Probable post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

Probable post-traumatic stress disorder was determined using the PTSD Checklist Civilian Version (PCL-C), developed by Weathers et al (Weathers, Litz et al. 1993). The PCL-C comprises 17 items relating to PTSD symptoms according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV) and is based on traumatic stress resulting from any stressful life event. Problems range from repeated, disturbing memories thoughts or images of stressful events (re-experiencing), physical reactions to reminders of events (arousal) or avoiding stressful experiences or taking part in activities or situations that remind people of traumatic events (avoidance/ numbing). Each item is a 5-point Likert scales indicating how much participants have been bothered by certain problems in the last month, with response options from 'Not at all' (1) to 'Extremely' (5). Total scores range from 17 to 85, with higher scores indicating greater PTSD symptomology.

Caseness criteria

First tested in Vietnam veterans, a cut-off score of 50 on the PCL was suggested as appropriate for Service personnel given the higher level of traumatic experiences in this population (Weathers, Litz et al. 1993, Forbes, Creamer et al. 2001). There is no agreed cut-off score for use of the PCL-C among women. Mathematical simulations suggest a PCL-C cut-off of 44-45 would provide an estimate similar to the true prevalence (Terhakopian, Sinaii et al. 2008). Research into PTSD among women in the general population suggests a PCL-C cut-off of 44 is the most appropriate in terms of achieving high specificity and sensitivity (Blanchard, Jones-Alexander et al. 1996). A score of ≥44 was therefore used as the primary method for determining probable PTSD caseness. Other methods of diagnosing probable PTSD caseness, such as the symptom cluster method or strict method based on both scores and symptom clusters were not used in this thesis. Due to a low number of cases, PCL-C scores were used as a continuous variable in some analyses.

Alcohol misuse

Alcohol misuse was assessed using the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Standardised in multiple countries around the world, AUDIT is the current gold standard measure and is used as a screening tool for identifying excessive or risky alcohol consumption and the consequences of harmful consumption (Babor, Higgins-Biddle et al. 2001).

AUDIT respondents complete 10 items to determine the frequency and level of alcohol consumption and problems that may have arisen as a result of their alcohol use. The first three items are 5-point Likert scales with responses that reflect the frequency of consumption of alcoholic beverages, the typical quantity of alcohol units consumed and binge-drinking. The next two items are 4-point Likert scales that reflect dependence symptoms such as not being able to stop drinking once they have started or needing a drink in the morning to get going after a drinking session from 'Never' (0) to 'Weekly' (3). Other items include Likert scale responses for needing a drink in the morning to get going after a drinking session ('Never' (0) to 'Less than monthly' (1), feeling guilt or remorse after drinking ('Never' (0) to 'Daily or almost daily' (4) and drinking-related memory loss ('Never' (0) to 'Less than monthly' (1). The last two items are 3-point Likert scales relating to alcohol-related injury and expressions of concern about drinking from others, with response options from 'No' (0) to 'Yes, during the last year' (4). Total scores range from 0 to 40, with higher scores indicating greater alcohol misuse.

Caseness criteria

Two methods were used to examine alcohol misuse and consumption – AUDIT caseness according to scores and AUDIT sub-scales (Babor, Higgins-Biddle et al. 2001).

a. AUDIT scores

Alcohol misuse caseness was assessed using an AUDIT score cut-off of ≥8 (Babor, Higgins-Biddle et al. 2001):

- ≤7 - little or no risk of alcohol misuse
- ≥8 to ≤15 - medium risk of alcohol misuse
- ≥16 to ≤19 - high risk of alcohol misuse
- ≥20 - possible alcohol dependence

Although Babor et al suggest using 7 as a cut-off for women, a cut-off of 8 was chosen to allow comparisons with estimates from women in the general English population and international S/Ps.

b. AUDIT subscales

As well as assessing alcohol misuse according to scores obtained on AUDIT, alcohol use can also be categorised according to three subscales depending on responses to particular sets of items: consumption at a hazardous level, presence of alcohol dependence and alcohol-related harm. The following sub-component scoring method is recommended (Babor, Higgins-Biddle et al. 2001):

- Hazardous alcohol consumption - score ≥1 on items 2 or 3 (typical quantity, frequency of heavy drinking (binge-drinking)
- Possible dependence - score ≥1 on items 4-6 (inability to stop, needing a drink in morning, not performing usual tasks)
- Harmful alcohol use - score ≥1 on items 7-10 (guilt/remorse, injury to self or others, blackouts, concern about drinking from others)

Marital satisfaction

Marital satisfaction was assessed using the Dyadic Adjustment Scale-7 (DAS-7). The original DAS was developed by Spanier to measure dyadic satisfaction, consensus, cohesion and affectional expression within couples (Spanier 1976). This 32-item scale was developed further and condensed into the DAS-7 as a means of rapidly screening couples for marital satisfaction (Sharpley and Rogers 1984).

Items in the DAS-7 cover perceived agreement between couple members on seven areas covering life philosophy, aims and goals, amount of time spent together, having stimulating exchanges of ideas, calmly discussing something, working together on a project and degree of happiness in the relationship. Six items are 6-point Likert scales with response options from 'Always disagree/Never (0)' to 'Always agree/More often (5)'. The seventh item is a 7-point rating of relationship happiness from 'Extremely unhappy (0)' to 'Perfect (6)'. 6. Total scores range from 0 to 36, with higher scores indicating greater marital satisfaction.

Caseness criteria

A cut-off score of <21 to indicate marital distress amongst couples was developed and validated by Hunsley et al (Hunsley, Best et al. 1999) and is used to identify marital distress in this study. Data on this outcome was not collected for participants who were not in a relationship at the time of the study (n=18).

Measures of well-being

In line with OECD recommendations (OECD 2011), well-being was measured using indicators of income and living standards that are intended to capture the productivity of individuals. While I was not able to examine S/P income, S/P employment, occupation and area measures of well-being were used as indicators of material living conditions (OECD 2011). The measures of well-being included:

- Employment status – employed outside the home, not employed outside the home
- Occupation – title of job
- Indices of multiple deprivation (derived from residential postcode data)

S/P employment and occupation

The employment status of S/Ps was determined with a single question asking whether S/Ps were currently employed outside the home – information on full or part-time employment was not collected. Respondents were requested to list their current or former occupation.

Occupational social class

The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) of occupations are used as a standardised method of classifying occupations within the United Kingdom according to the level and content of skill involved in each job (Office for National Statistics 2010a). SOC was used to determine occupational social class based on the current and former job titles provided by S/Ps. For each stated occupation, the major group classification was obtained using the online SOC coding tool.[4] If more than one occupation was listed, the occupation with the highest major group was used according to the recommended methodology (Office for National Statistics 2010b). SOC major group classifications were then categorised into occupational classes using National Statistics Socio-Economic classifications (NS-SEC) of socio-economic position.

With only a limited amount of information available on S/P occupation and no information on the size or the number of employees in the organisations S/Ps worked for, the simplified three-class version of the NS-SEC was used (Figure 9) (Office for National Statistics 2010b). This method covered three main occupational classes of jobs requiring similar levels of skill – managerial and professional, intermediate and routine and manual – and included a category of unemployed. As per the NS-SEC methodology, respondents were coded into these classes

[4] Available at www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/HTMLDocs/dev3/ONS_SOC_occupation_coding_tool.html

according to the occupational title provided regardless of whether they were currently employed outside the home or not, as previous employment can give an indication as to social class and students were not classified. As a result, the number of unemployed respondents differs between employment status and NS-SEC social class variables.

Figure 9: NS-SEC occupational social classes categorisation

eight classes	five classes	three classes
1. Higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations 1.1. Large employers and higher managerial and administrative occupations 1.2. Higher professional occupations 2. Lower managerial, administrative and professional occupations	1. Higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations	1. Higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations
3. Intermediate occupations	2. Intermediate occupations	2. Intermediate occupations
4. Small employers and own account workers	3. Small employers and own account workers	
5. Lower supervisory and technical occupations	4. Lower supervisory and technical occupations	3. Routine and manual occupations
6. Semi-routine occupations	5. Semi-routine occupations	
7. Routine occupations		
8. Never worked and long-term unemployed	*6. Never worked and long-term unemployed*	*4. Never worked and long-term unemployed*

Adapted from Standard Occupational Classification 2010 Volume 3: The National Statistics Socio-economic Classification: (Rebased on the SOC2010) User Manual (2010), Office of National Statistics, Palgrave Macmillan, p13.

A total of 36 respondents had missing social class data; employment status was not provided for 11 respondents, 18 could not be coded due to a lack of detail in relation to occupational title, two employed respondents gave no occupational title and 5 students were classed as missing in accordance with the NS-SEC methodology.

Due to low numbers within categories, the three classes were further collapsed into 'managerial/professional/intermediate' and 'routine/manual'. The category of not employed was also included.

Deprivation

Indices of multiple deprivation

Indices of multiple deprivation (IMD) are comprised of seven distinct measures of deprivation reported at the area level; income deprivation, employment deprivation, health deprivation and disability, education skills and training deprivation, barriers to housing and services, living environment deprivation, and crime (Department for Communities and Local Government 2011). These measures are combined from individuals or areas at the small area level, for example LSOAs, and can be constructed into an overall measure of deprivation for individuals residing in each area. Although the concept of deprivation is similar across all three countries in the United Kingdom, different domains, indicators and data are used to construct indices of deprivation in England, Scotland and Wales, meaning that the three measures are not comparable and should not be combined (Office for National Statistics 2013). As a result, findings on deprivation are limited to S/Ps living in England and are presented as quintiles of deprivation based on 2011 LSOAs across England.

2010 Indices of multiple deprivation (IMD) data adjusted for LSOA 2011 boundary changes were obtained from Public Health England (Public Health England 2010). IMD data was missing for 123 S/Ps: 115 had missing LSOA data as they did not provide postcodes and an additional 8 resided in Welsh postcodes. Because of this missing data, the use of the deprivation was restricted to comparisons with women in the general population.

Socio-demographic and military characteristics

S/P socio-demographics and Service personnel military characteristics were used to describe the quantitative sample and to examine associations with S/P employment, mental health and marital satisfaction.

S/P socio-demographic characteristics

S/Ps provided socio-demographic information on:

- Age – in years at time of survey

- Self-reported proximity to military base – on barracks, in town or village with a military base, in town or village away from a military base, other (e.g. private housing, overseas or partner no longer in service)
- Current home postcode
- Number of children
- Age of youngest child – years at time of survey
- Relationship status – currently in a relationship, not in a relationship
- Relationship type – married, living with partner, in a long term relationship but not living together, new relationship/dating

Urban-rural classification

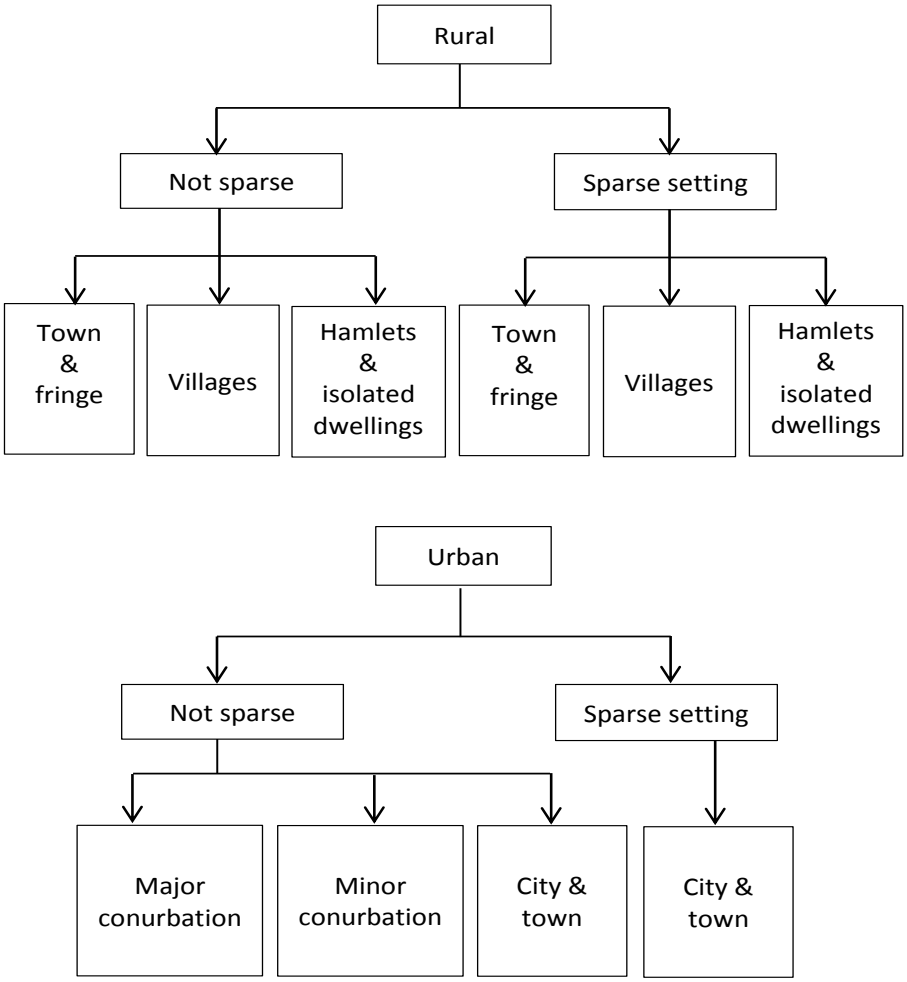
In addition to these variables, urban-rural classification was derived from S/P home postcodes using the Rural-Urban Definition for Small Area Geographies method (RUC2011) (Bibby and Brindley 2013). This variable was used as an objective complement to the self-reported variable 'proximity to military base' as it was hypothesised military bases would be more likely to be in rural or semi-rural geographical locations.

The methodology classifies LSOAs (lower layer super output areas) according to their settlement type and population density (Figure 10). LSOAs were created using data from the 2011 Census and use a geographical hierarchy to allow for stable and comparable analysis of small area statistics over time as a way of helping to monitor policy effects (Neighbourhood Statistics 2014). Each LSOA is built up of 4 to 6 output areas, which are clusters of adjacent postcodes, and contain between 1,000 and 3,000 people and 400-1,200 households (Office for National Statistics). LSOAs were classified as sparse if the density of dwellings was in the lowest 5 percent at three measures of population sparsity (density of dwellings per hectare at radii of 10kms, 20kms and 30kms).

RUC 2011 urban-rural postcode classifications for England and Wales using 2011 LSOA data were obtained from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) geoportal database (ONS Geography Customer Services 2013). 115 S/Ps had missing LSOA data and were unable to be categorised using RUC 2011 classes: 44 S/Ps did not provide postcode information, 16 gave overseas addresses, 14 gave British Forces Post Office addresses, 34 gave addresses in Northern Ireland or Scotland and 7 lived in areas with population below the LSOA limits. For this thesis, urban-rural classification was measured as a binary variable (urban-rural residence). Although a large amount of data was missing for this variable, it was included in the analyses as it was

associated with S/P employment in the literature review and it was hypothesised that it may be associated with other measures of health and well-being through social isolation.

Figure 10: Rural-urban typology output classification



Adapted from Bibby and Brindley 2013

Service personnel military characteristics

Information collected from Service personnel included:

- Service – Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Army, Royal Air Force
- Rank – officer, non-commissioned officer (NCO), other ranks (corporal or lower)
- Engagement type – regular or reserve
- Serving status – still serving, no longer in service
- Length of service (years)
- Experience of combat role – combat role in parent unit
- Experience of deployment – deployment to Iraq and/or Afghanistan
- Family separation – self-reported time away from children in the last 2 years

Due to the low numbers within some outcomes (n<50), socio-demographic and military variable categories were largely collapsed into binary variables. This was done using appropriate cut-offs; for example the age of youngest child was collapsed into primary (3-10) and secondary (11-18) age and length of service of Service personnel was categorised into 0-9 years, 10-22years and 22 years or more..

Analysis

Statistical computing packages

Most quantitative analyses (Chapters 5-9) were undertaken using Stata© 11.2 (StataCorp 2009). Structural equation modelling was conducted using Mplus© 7.31.

Response weights

Response weights were generated for each S/P according to the characteristics of the Service personnel they were in a current or former relationship with at the time of the Children of Military Fathers' study. This method was used as no information was available on S/Ps who did not take part and Service personnel were the first point of recruitment in the Children of Military Fathers' study. This was conducted using the following process:

1. Service personnel variables hypothesised to be associated with S/P response were selected according to prior research. Service personnel characteristics of Service personnel shown to be significantly associated with Service personnel outcomes in other departmental studies – Service personnel age, Service, rank, engagement type (regular/reserve), serving status, experience of deployment to Iraq and/or Afghanistan and combat role were hypothesised to be associated with S/P response in this study.
2. Variables specific to the Children of Military Fathers' study – relationship status, number of mothers per Service personnel, number of children and PTSD status – were hypothesised to be associated with S/P response given the recruitment strategy of this sample.
3. Univariable regression models were conducted to investigate associations between S/P response and these socio-demographic and military characteristics of Service personnel.
4. Univariable regression models identified that S/P response was associated with Service personnel age, Service, rank, engagement type, number of mothers per Service personnel, number of children, relationship status, experience of deployment to Iraq and/or Afghanistan and combat role at least p<0.10.
5. These variables were included in a multivariable logistic regression model to identity which predicted S/P response at p<0.05. S/P response was found to be predicted by:

- Service personnel rank
- number of mothers per Service personnel
- relationship status
- deployment to Iraq and/or Afghanistan

6. An estimate of the goodness of fit of this model was performed and indicated good fit (Pearson X^2=13.31, p=0.42, df (13)).
7. Sample weights accounting for differences in S/P response were generated as the inverse probability of responding, once sampled, to account for non-response and were applied in all analyses.

Response weights for comparison studies were already derived and supplied with the data.

Socio-demographic and military profile

Percentages weighted according to non-response and unweighted counts of S/P socio-demographic and Service personnel characteristics were tabulated to construct socio-demographic and military profiles of S/Ps as per the first objective of this thesis (objective 1, Chapter 5). In order to place the sample of S/Ps within the wider context of women in the general population and the UK military community, comparisons of S/P socio-demographic and Service personnel military characteristics were made between the thesis sample and appropriate comparison samples using Pearson's chi-squared tests. These are discussed in detail below.

Prevalence of employment, mental health, alcohol misuse and marital satisfaction

In order to address objectives 2 and 3 of this thesis, percentages weighted according to non-response and unweighted counts of S/P socio-demographics and Service personnel characteristics were tabulated to estimate the prevalence of employment, mental health (probable depression and PTSD), alcohol misuse and marital distress among S/Ps (Chapters 6-9).

While an overall prevalence of employment was reported for the sample, significant differences in S/P employment at $p<0.05$ according to personnel serving status were found during initial data exploration. Prevalence estimates were estimated separately for the S/Ps of serving and veteran personnel to examine the impact of military life on the employment of current S/Ps. Significant differences were not found for occupational social class, mental health or alcohol misuse among S/Ps. Associations approaching significance were found for S/P PTSD and marital distress, therefore it was decided to analyse the entire sample.

Comparisons of profiles and prevalence estimates with general population and military studies

Comparisons were made between prevalence estimates of employment, mental health, alcohol misuse and marital satisfaction among S/Ps and women in the general population to address objectives 2 and 3 and examine the influence of military life on S/Ps (Chapters 6-9). These are listed in Table 6. Comparisons were made using Pearson's chi-squared tests and unadjusted and/or adjusted regressions as appropriate based on number of cases.

Comparison data sources

Millennium Cohort Study (MCS4)

Comparison data for S/P socio-demographics and marital satisfaction data among women in the general population came from the fourth wave of the Millennium Cohort Study (University of London 2008). This study was chosen as it was a study of women with children. It was also conducted during a similar time period to the data collection for Children of Military Fathers' study. Data was restricted to women aged 25-55 years with at least one child in order to construct a dataset comparable with the demographic structure of the S/Ps sample. The Millennium Cohort Study included information from military families – such participants were removed in order to make the comparison study as representative of the general population as possible (n=7).

Estimates of marital adjustment using the DAS-7 among women in the general UK population were not available. In order to compare findings from S/Ps to the wider UK population, questions on relationship happiness among S/Ps from the DAS-7 (item 7) was compared to a question in the fourth wave of the Millennium Cohort Study. Both studies used a 7-point Likert scale to measure relationship happiness, with responses from 'Extremely/Very Unhappy' (0/1) to 'Perfect/Very Happy' (6/7). Neither study included guidance on the values for other points on the scale. To categorise these scales, the mid-point of each was taken to represent "Happy" (S/Ps=3, MCS4=4). Responses below this value were categorised into "Unhappy" and responses above categorised into "Very Happy".

King's Centre for Military Health (KCMHR) military cohort

A comparison was made between the military characteristics of Service personnel and the KCMHR military health and well-being cohort (Hotopf, Hull et al. 2006, Fear, Jones et al. 2010) their husbands or partners were initially drawn from in order to situate this data in the wider context of health in the military community (objective 1). The dataset was limited to male

personnel collected at phase 2 between 2007 and 2009. The studies were compared according to Service, rank, engagement type, length of Service, experience of combat role and experience of deployment to Iraq and/or Afghanistan.

Table 6: Sources of comparison data for the quantitative study

Data source	Variables	Year of data collection
Millennium Cohort Study – Wave 4 (MCS4)[a]	Age Employment status Occupational social class Urban-rural residence Indices of multiple deprivation (IMD) Number of children Relationship status Relationship happiness	2008
King's Centre for Military Health Cohort (KCMHR)[b]	Service Rank Engagement type Length of Service Experience of combat role Experience of deployment to Iraq/Afghanistan	2007-2009
Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey (APMS)[c]	Depression - Clinical Interview Schedule-Revised (CIS-R) (moderate or severe) PTSD – Trauma Screening Questionnaire – (TSQ) Alcohol Misuse – Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT)	2007

[a](University of London 2008) [b](Hotopf, Hull et al. 2006, Fear, Jones et al. 2010) [c](McManus, Meltzer et al. 2009)

Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey (APMS)

The Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey (APMS) (McManus, Meltzer et al. 2009) (Table 6) was used to provide comparison data on the prevalence of probable depression (moderate or severe criteria as per Clinical Interview Schedule-Revised (CIS-R), probable PTSD (Trauma Screening Questionnaire (TSQ) and alcohol misuse (AUDIT) among women in the general English population (objective 3). The PHQ-9 has been validated against clinical interviews such

as that used to determine probable depression caseness in the APMS and both studies used the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) to assess alcohol misuse. However, different measures of probable PTSD were used in the two studies. The APMS used the Trauma Screening Questionnaire (TSQ), which is comprised of five re-experiencing and five arousal items which align to DSM-IV criteria. Respondents must endorse at least six of the items at least twice in the past week to meet criteria for probable PTSD (Brewin, Rose et al. 2002). The PCL-C used in the Children of Military Fathers' study is based on respondent's experiences in the last month and includes items on avoidance and numbing. Because of the differences between the items included in the measures and the time frames respondents were asked to consider, comparisons of estimates from these two measures may not be truly comparable but give an indication as to the prevalence among the two samples.

Despite these differences, this study was chosen as a comparison as it is the largest community study of mental health in the UK, although it is limited to respondents in England. Other sources of prevalence estimates of the mental health in women in the general population were sought at the time of analysis but none contained similar measures of mental health or comparable populations. Other community studies were considered in the initial stages of analysis, such as the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC) but were rejected due to a lack of comparable mental health outcomes.

As with the data from the MCS4, the APMS data was restricted to women aged 25-55 years with at least one biological child in order to construct a dataset comparable with the demographic structure of the S/Ps sample. Women who had previously served in the Armed Forces or those who were unsure of their serving status were excluded (n=30).

Comparison analyses

The prevalence of probable depression and PTSD among S/Ps was compared to the APMS using Pearson's chi-squared tests (objective 3). Further analyses could not be conducted due to the low number of cases.

Logistic regression was used to compare alcohol misuse and consumption outcomes and relationship happiness among S/Ps to similar women in general population samples. Alcohol analyses were adjusted for variables common to both studies that are associated with alcohol use – age, employment and presence of children (Maloney, Hutchinson et al. 2010, Health and Social Care Information Centre 2013). Relationship happiness analyses were adjusted for variables common to both studies that are associated with relationship happiness – age

(VanLaningham, Johnson et al. 2001), number of children (Twenge, Campbell et al. 2003, Wendorf, Lucas et al. 2011) and employment (Rogers and DeBoer 2001).

Associations between S/P outcomes, S/P socio-demographics and Service personnel military characteristics

A two-step process was used to examine how S/P employment, mental health, alcohol and marital satisfaction might differ in relation to S/P socio-demographics and the military characteristics of Service personnel (objectives 2 and 3, Chapters 6-8).

Pearson's chi-squared tests

Initial analyses of associations between employment, mental health and marital satisfaction outcomes and S/P socio-demographics and Service personnel military characteristics were conducted using Pearson's chi-squared tests to determine which variables were statistically significantly associated with employment or mental health outcomes. The inclusion of these variables was based on those identified as significantly associated with S/P outcomes in the literature reviews (Chapter 2, p51). S/P socio-demographic variables included were:

- S/P age – years
- Employment – employment status and occupational social class (mental health only)
- Residence – proximity to military bases, urban-rural residence
- Children – number of children, age of youngest child
- Relationship status – married vs. other form of relationship

Service personnel military characteristics included were:

- Service – Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Army, Royal Air Force
- Rank – officer, non-commissioned officer (NCO), other ranks (corporal or lower)
- Engagement type – regular or reserve
- Serving status – still serving, no longer in service
- Length of service (years)
- Experience of combat role – combat role in parent unit
- Experience of deployment – deployment to Iraq and/or Afghanistan
- Family separation – self-reported time away from children in the last 2 years

Initial associations between the mental health of S/Ps and Service personnel in military couples were also examined using Pearson's chi-squared tests associations between the mental health

outcomes of S/Ps in military couples. Service personnel mental health outcomes according to the following score cut-offs were used:

- Probable depression (PHQ-9 ≥10)
- Probable PTSD (PCL-C ≥50)
- Alcohol misuse (AUDIT ≥16)
- Marital distress (DAS-7 <21)

Variables significant at p<0.10 were included in regressions analyses. Where the number of cases was low, Fishers exact tests were performed. This test was performed on tables with at least one cell with expected n<5. Estimates of significant differences between groups were the same between the two tests.

Regression analyses

Regression analyses were performed in order to estimate the strength of the associations between S/P employment, mental health and marital satisfaction outcomes and S/P socio-demographics and Service personnel characteristics after adjusting for other significant factors (objectives 2 and 3). As the majority of dependent variables were binary, logistic regression was used as the primary means of analysis. Further analyses of employment were limited to the S/Ps of currently serving personnel in order to examine factors associated with this outcome among women who were still connected with the military.

Univariable and multivariable regression models

Associations with p<0.10 in Pearson's chi-square tests were deemed to be variables of potential influence and further analysed in univariable regression models if there were a sufficient number of cases. Variables significant at p<0.10 in univariable regression models were included in multivariable regression analyses that estimated adjusted odds ratios and 95% confidence intervals after controlling for the effect of covariates also significant in univariable analyses. S/P age was included as a potential confounder in all multivariable models regardless of significance. The exception to this was occupational social class, which was not included in models containing employment due to the high degree of correlation between these variables.

Two sets of multivariable logistic models were used to examine the association between outcomes and S/P socio-demographics and Service personnel characteristics. Both were adjusted for S/P age, whether significant or not. The first contained S/P socio-demographic variables significant at p<0.10 in either Pearson's chi-squared tests or univariable regression

models. The second contained Service personnel characteristics significant at p<0.10 in either Pearson's chi-squared tests or univariable logistic regression models.

Negative binomial regression models

As there were a low number of cases of probable depression (PHQ-9) and PTSD (PCL-C), negative binomial regression (NBR) methods were used to examine associations between measure scores and S/P socio-demographics and Service personnel military characteristics. NBR was selected as it is commonly used for analysing count variables for samples where there is increased variance amongst the data (Heeringa, West et al. 2010). This 'overdispersion' means other models, such as Poisson, do not have the appropriate distributions on which to model such data, resulting in larger z-values and smaller p-values, over-estimating the effect size (Scott Long and Freese 2006). Before analysis, PCL-C scores were transformed and rescaled to zero by subtracting 17 (the lowest possible score).

Median scores and inter-quartile ranges were estimated for overall S/P PHQ-9 and PCL-C scores. As in logistic regressions, associations with a p value of <0.10 in univariable NBR models were deemed to be variables of interest and were included in multivariable NBR models where appropriate. The same categories of S/P socio-demographic and Service personnel characteristics were used as in previous analyses. Estimates were exponentiated from beta coefficients within the models (Anderton and Cheney 2004), a common method of reporting parameter estimates when modelling count data (Hilbe 2011). Incidence rate ratios (IRRs) and 95% confidence intervals were estimated from these to determine statistically significant differences in S/P mental health measure scores according to their socio-demographic characteristics and the military characteristics of Service personnel after controlling for other significant covariates.

Dyadic data analyses

With data from the Children of Military Fathers' study collected from both S/Ps and Service personnel, dyadic data analytical methods were employed to examine how S/P marital satisfaction might be influenced by the marital satisfaction and mental health of Service personnel they were in a relationship with (objective 3, Chapter 9, p218).

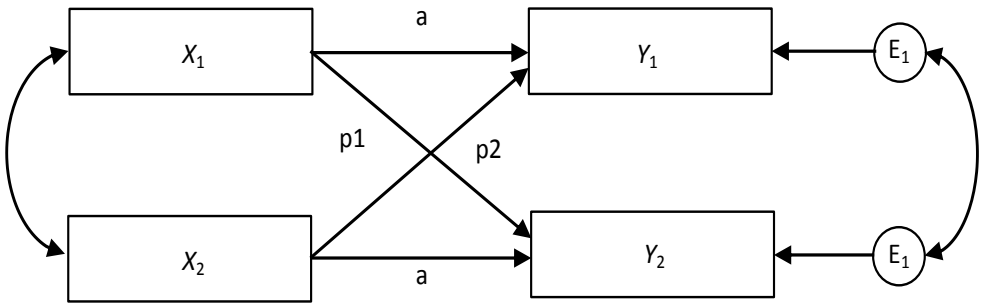
Data from dyads requires different analytical techniques to those employed in analysing the data of individuals as the close nature of dyadic relationships means the outcomes of couple members are linked rather than being independent; for example, the presence of an outcome (such as probable depression) in one couple member may influence the same outcome in the

other couple member and vice versa. Under such circumstances, the assumption of independence present in standard methods of analysis such as regression no longer applies and can lead to bias of the standard errors in significance testing (Kenny and Judd 1986, Cook and Kenny 2005, Kenny, Kashy et al. 2006).

Actor Partner Interdependence Model

A simple but effective conceptual model of the association between dyad outcomes is the Actor Partner Interdependence Model (APIM) developed by Kashy and Kenny (Kenny 1996, Cook and Kenny 2005). APIM takes into account the lack of independence between dyad member outcomes by allowing the effects of the individual, or actor, as well as the effect of the other dyad member, the partner, to be modelled (Cook and Kenny 2005). Figure 11 presents a basic example of this model, with scores for person A (X_1, Y_1) and person B from the same measure (X_2, Y_2). Pathways labelled 'a' are *actor* pathways and show the effect of person A's variable X on person A's variable Y. Pathways labelled 'p' represent the *partner* effect of the other dyad member on outcomes and indicate how person A's variable X impacts on person B's variable Y (p1). 'E' represents residual errors of the Y scores for each person (Kenny, Kashy et al. 2006).

Figure 11: Actor Partner Interdependence Model (APIM)



Adapted from Kenny et al 2006 p145

Structural equation modelling

Structural equation modelling (SEM) is one of the methodologies used for dyadic analysis (Cook and Kenny 2005, Kenny, Kashy et al. 2006). SEM builds on commonly used statistical methods and at its most basic combines factor analysis, through the creation of latent variables representing unmeasured or unobserved concepts, and simultaneous regression analyses measuring the effect and influence of multiple independent and dependent variables into one analytical technique (Hoyle 2011). Importantly for this thesis, SEM allows for the explicit modelling of both actor and partner effects (Kenny 1996). It also has advantages over

other methods of data analysis (Byrne 2012); by determining relationships *a priori* it aims to confirm theory rather than explore data and models can be constructed from both observed (measured) variables and unobserved (latent) variables.

SEM follows a set of common procedural processes; hypotheses were developed *a priori*, both unobserved (latent) and observed variables can be represented, estimates of parameters arise from variance and covariance of data, and there is a focus on model fit rather than overall statistical significance as in other methods (Kline 2005). Each SEM has two components; the measurement model, which describes the relationship of the unobserved and observed variables (i.e. how the latent variable is constructed) and the structural model, which describes how latent variables are associated with the observed data (Geiser 2013). Latent variables represent phenomena that are not, or are unable to be, directly measured by data but can be estimated by variables that can be measured (observed). An example of a latent variable might be life satisfaction which is comprised of a number of different questions (observed variables) regarding agency, finances and social support (Byrne 2012). The ability to use latent variables is one of the strengths of SEM as it allows researchers to test constructs and combine statistical and conceptual hypotheses into one model (Hoyle 2011). Other variables are either endogenous (dependent), in which they have pathways in the model directed towards them, or exogenous (independent), in that the model does not attempt to explain them (Hoyle 2011). An additional benefit of SEM is that the associations being examined can be depicted schematically to help give a clear understanding of the concepts and relationships under investigation (Byrne 2012). These models follow set notations; latent variables are depicted as circles, squares/rectangles represent observed (measured) variables, single arrows the influence of one variable on another and double-headed arrows covariance (or correlation if standardised) between variables; residual errors, the measurement error of observed variables, may be represented by small circles (Kline 2005).

Analyses using SEM follow five recommended steps: *specification* of the model, where latent and /or observed variables within the model are determined; *estimation* of parameters within a model; *evaluation of fit*; *modification;* and *interpretation* (Hoyle 2011). One component of the specification process requires model identification, in which each parameter must be able to be uniquely estimated from the data (Ullman 2006). SEM can either be under-identified, just-identified or over-identified. Over-identified models have fewer parameters than the number of data points and generate unique estimates for free parameters, under-identified models produce no unique estimates for parameters as they do not contain enough information from the data to generate unique estimates – i.e. there could be an infinite

number of solutions to the model – and just-identified models produce estimates but have the same number of parameters as data points, resulting in zero degrees of freedom with unique values for each parameter - such models are unable to be tested statistically. The aim of SEM is to produce over-identified models with positive degrees of freedom as this allows for statistical testing and acceptance or rejection of hypothesised models (Kenny, Kashy et al. 2006, Hoyle 2011, Byrne 2012). Models containing latent variables require at least three indicators for each latent variable in order to be identified; the factor loading of the first indicator variable is usually set to 1.0 to set a scale of measurement for the latent variable and in order to identify the variance of the latent variable and therefore the model (Kenny, Kashy et al. 2006, Hoyle 2011).

SEM are assessed using a number of statistics and indices to determine how well a hypothesised model fits the data (Hoyle 2011). The chi-square test is the most common of these statistics but tends to give large results for non-normally distributed data or large sample sizes (N>400). As a result, there is a high likelihood that it will suggest poor fit, and therefore erroneous rejection of proposed models (Kenny, Kashy et al. 2006). Because of the increased chances of rejecting models with only minor differences between implied and observed covariance matrices and the limitations of assuming a chi-square distribution that is unlikely to be seen in the data, other indices were developed to use in conjunction with, or instead of, the model chi-square (Hoyle 2011). Commonly reported indices that are less sensitive to sample size include the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), a measure of absolute fit, and incremental measures of fit such as the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Tucker-Lewis Fit Index (TLI). While there is no concrete judgement on cut-offs for these indices, accepted guidelines based on simulation studies suggest a RMSEA of 0-0.5 indicates good fit to the data, 0.05-0.08 close fit, 0.08-0.10 marginal fit and greater than 0.10 an unacceptable fit, with the upper value of the 90% confidence interval preferably no greater than 0.08. Values for CFI and TLI close to 1.0 indicate a well-fitting model, with 0.95 advised as an appropriate cut-off for both (West, Taylor et al. 2012). Both RMSEA and CFI have been shown to be reasonably robust against non-normality once adjustments are made using weighted estimators (Hutchinson and Olmos 1998). For these reasons, chi-square was not reported in the SEM included in this thesis and the fit indices of RMSEA, CFI and TLI used instead.

Justification for using SEM

Following the decision to examine marital satisfaction among S/Ps, it seemed appropriate to use SEM as the method of analysis given the benefits of this method. Unlike regression, which assumes independence between respondents, SEM was used to account for the

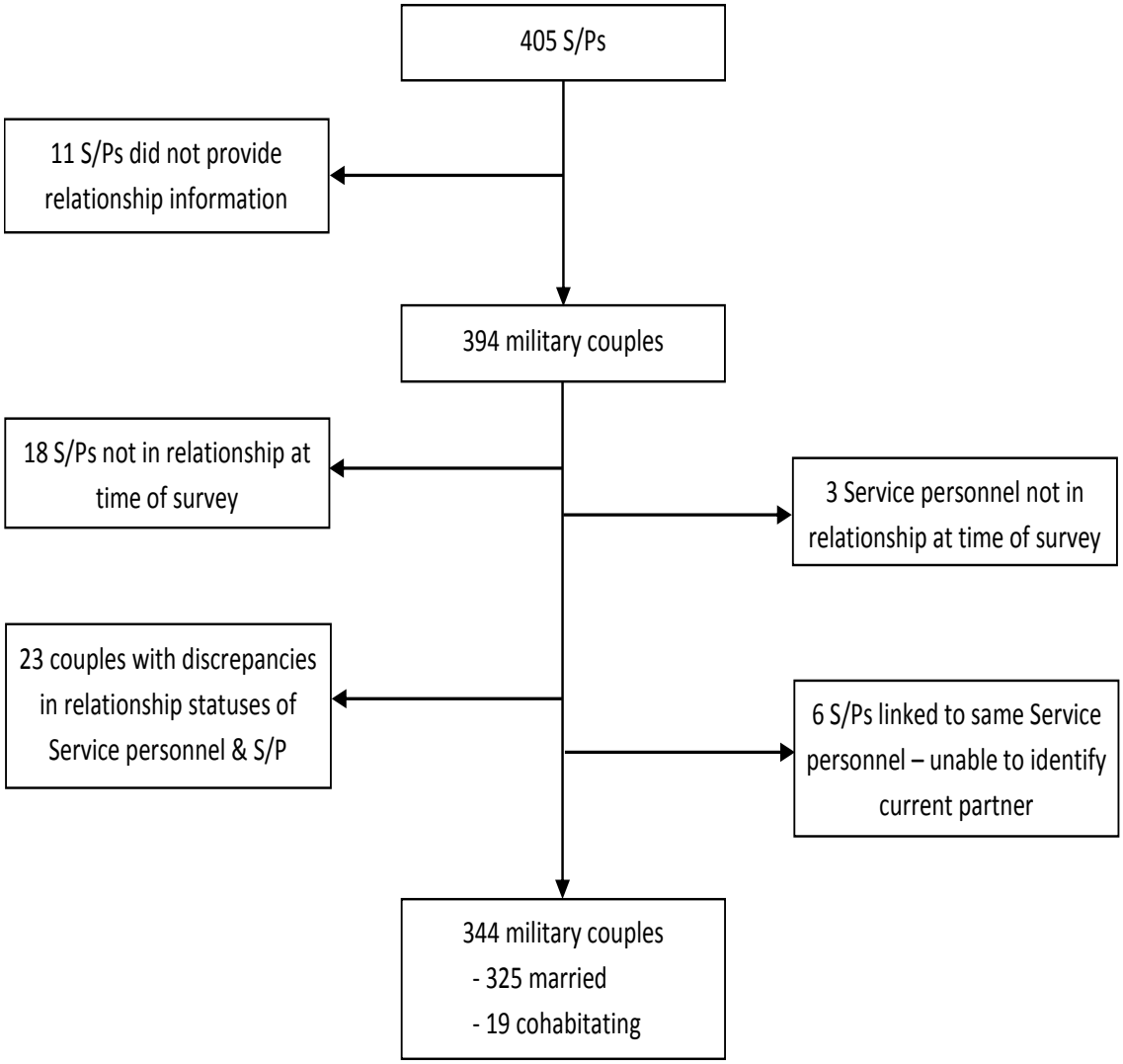
interdependence between the outcomes of S/Ps and Service personnel, allowing for the exploration of the impact not only of the mental health of S/Ps on their own marital satisfaction but also the impact of the mental health of their military partners, all while accounting for socio-demographic and military characteristics. This method also allowed marital satisfaction to be modelled as a latent variable to better reflect its unobservable conceptual nature and for the inclusion of *a priori* hypotheses to help confirm theories about marital satisfaction in this population. Because of these benefits, methods like multi-level modelling that do not allow for the creation of such variables were not deemed appropriate for this particular analysis.

SEM methodology

Data

The association between the outcomes of S/Ps and Service personnel was hypothesised to be weaker or non-existent between those who were no longer in a relationship at the time of the Children of Military Fathers' study. The dataset was restricted accordingly and limited to couples comprised of one S/P and one Service personnel with matching relationship status. Of the 405 S/Ps in the sample, a total of 50 couples were excluded from the analyses for the following reasons; one or both members did not provide information on their relationship status (n=11); respondents were not in a relationship at the time of the survey (S/Ps n=18, Service personnel n=3); discrepancies in the self-reported relationship status of couple members (n=23); where it was not possible to differentiate which S/P was the current partner of Service personnel with more than one S/P in the survey (n=6). Analyses were restricted to 344 couples who were identified as being in a current relationship with one another; 325 who were married couples and 19 who were in long-term, cohabitating relationships (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Flow diagram of participants in dyadic data analyses



Model development

Model assumptions

The structural equation models were based on the following assumptions:

- **Relationship status** – S/Ps and Service personnel who both stated they were in a married relationship at the time of the survey were assumed to be married to each other; no questions were included in the original survey to confirm this.
- **Interdependence** – a linear relationship was assumed between S/P and Service personnel marital satisfaction scores and corresponding actor and partner mental health measure scores. This was confirmed using scatterplots. As recommended by Kenny et al (Kenny, Kashy et al. 2006), non-independence between S/P and Service personnel mental health outcomes was tested by estimating the Pearson correlation coefficients

between the mental health measure scores of military couples in Stata.[5] Although not required due to the assumption of independence, initial analyses in Stata tested for collinearity between the binary mental health outcomes of S/Ps and Service personnel across the four measures. No collinearity was found between the mental health outcomes of either S/Ps or Service personnel when tested in weighted regressions, with variance inflation factors (VIF) ranging from 1.01-2.82 across the two groups, lower than the recommended cut-off of 10 indicative of further examination of the association between variables (O'Brien 2007).

- **Normality** – as exogenous variables were assumed to be independent of each other in SEM, mental health scores were not co-varied between individuals or couple members and assumptions regarding normality did not apply. The SEM assumption of a normal distribution for endogenous variables was not met for some individual DAS-7 questions due to their ordinal nature – this was resolved by treating all DAS-7 questions as categorical rather than continuous variables in the analysis. The factor loading of the first item of the DAS-7 onto the latent marital satisfaction variable was set to 1.0.

Model specification

An *a priori* model was developed based on the literature on marital satisfaction among S/Ps and empirical findings from this thesis. Studies of S/Ps have indicated there is an association between S/P marital satisfaction and PTSD among S/Ps and Service personnel, although there was a lack of literature in regards to S/P PTSD (Chapter 2, p47). The following variables were included given their associations with S/P marital satisfaction in the literature:

- S/P and Service personnel probable depression (PHQ-9 scores)
- Service personnel probable PTSD (PCL-C scores)
- Service personnel marital satisfaction

Community based studies of women in the general population provided extra evidence for an association between S/P marital satisfaction and mental health (Fincham, Beach et al. 1997a, Whisman 1999, Davila, Karney et al. 2003, Trombello, Schoebi et al. 2011). While there was no evidence to suggest an association between alcohol misuse and S/P marital satisfaction, due to associations with decreased relationship satisfaction, negative marital interactions and intimate partner violence among women in the general population both S/P and Service

[5] This was not conducted in Mplus due to the estimator used. See www.statmodel2.com/discussion/messages/11/4162. html?1357073539 for a discussion of this.

personnel alcohol misuse measure scores were initially included in the model (Kyriacou, Anglin et al. 1999, Marshal 2003, Fischer and Wiersma 2012).

The following variables were included in the model based on the empirical data (Chapter 9, p219):

- S/P age (years)
- Number of children (discrete)
- Service personnel rank (officer, NCO/other)

a. Confirmatory Factor Analyses

Separate confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) were performed for S/Ps and Service personnel to ensure DAS-7 questions loaded satisfactorily onto the independent marital satisfaction latent variables. Factor loadings for individual DAS-7 questions were deemed to be acceptable if four or more of the items loaded onto the latent marital variable for S/Ps and Service personnel at above 0.6 (Guadagnoli and Velicer 1988) – all items did in the initial CFAs (Table 36, Appendix 2).

b. Interim models

The SEM was constructed using a step-wise approach. Once CFAs were confirmed for S/Ps and Service personnel, the following interim models were constructed and run in Mplus before being combined into one final model. This allowed me to understand the associations between marital satisfaction and various independent variables;

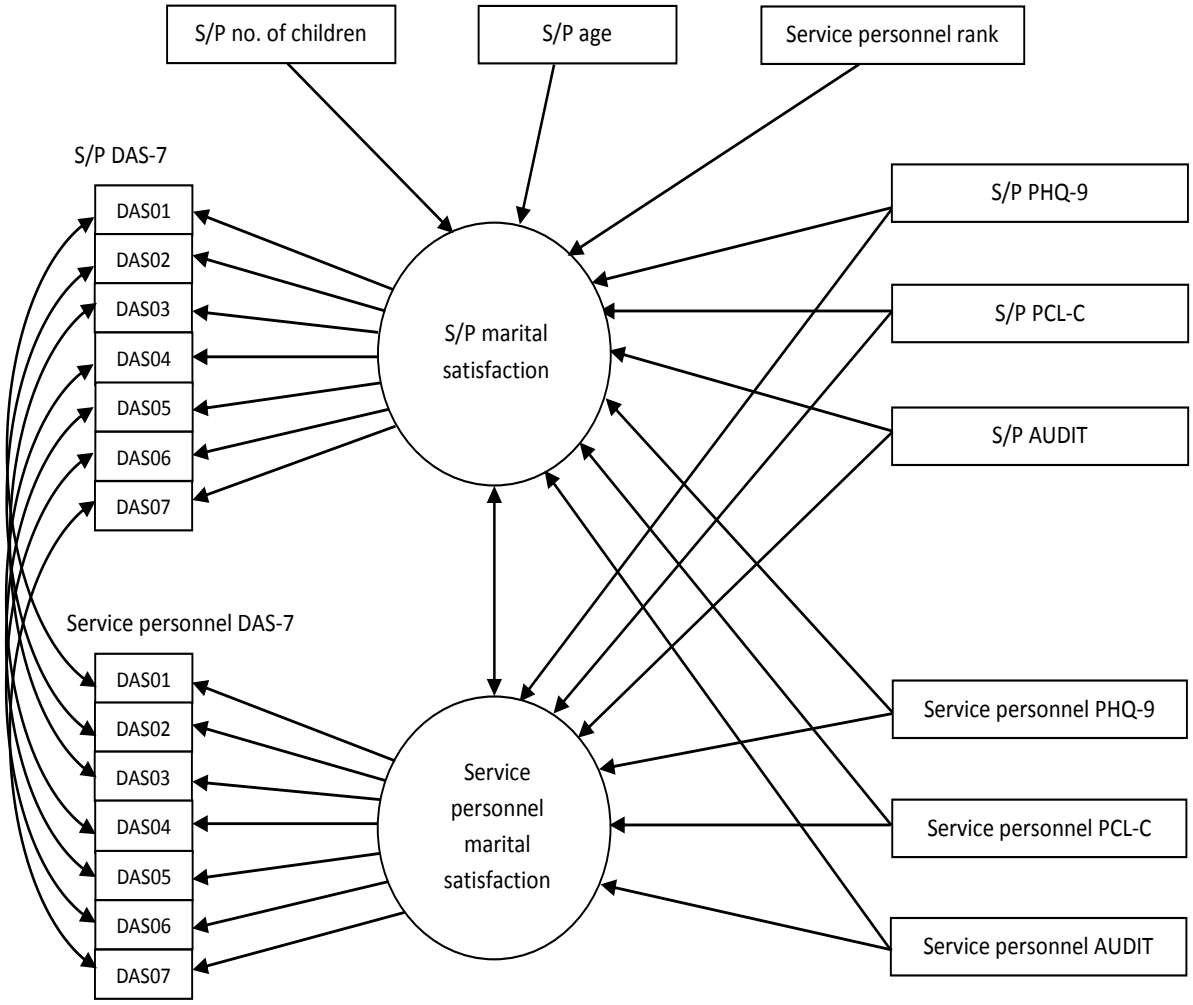
1. S/P marital satisfaction predicted by S/P mental health scores
2. S/P marital satisfaction predicted by Service personnel mental health scores
3. Service personnel marital satisfaction predicted by Service personnel mental health scores
4. Service personnel marital satisfaction predicted by S/P mental health scores

c. A priori model

The *a priori* SEM (Figure 13) hypothesised that S/P marital satisfaction was influenced via actor effects from their own mental health (probable depression and PTSD) and alcohol misuse and through partner effects from Service personnel mental health (probable depression and PTSD) and alcohol misuse): S/P socio-demographic factors (age (years), number of children) and military characteristics (rank) were also included. The marital satisfaction of S/Ps and Service personnel was hypothesised to be correlated between the members of couples. Individual DAS questions were co-varied between couple members as it was hypothesised S/Ps and Service

personnel in a relationship would give similar answers to the same questions. This allowed any residual error from the factor loadings of DAS-7 questions onto the latent variables to be accounted for.

Figure 13: *A priori* structural model of S/P marital satisfaction



Model modification

While the fit indices of the *a priori* model indicated a close fit to the data, attempts were made to improve the model following evaluation. These included removing pathways that were not significant in dyadic correlations to simplify the model and altering the association between S/P and Service personnel marital satisfaction from a correlation to a regression (see Figure 16). Pathways for S/P alcohol measure scores were removed as were the associations between Service personnel alcohol misuse measure scores on S/P marital satisfaction due to the lack of correlation. Service personnel alcohol misuse measure scores were retained in the model due to the correlations found with the DAS-7 scores of Service personnel. The modification facilities of Mplus were consulted but these were only included if logical in regards to the data or the literature.

SEM analysis

SEM analyses were conducted in Mplus Version 7.31 (Muthén and Muthén 1998-2012). In order to account for the interdependence between the outcomes of couple members, analysis was performed at the level of the dyad, rather than at the level of the individual (Kenny, Kashy et al. 2006). This data was organised by dyad, with the data from each pair on one line of the database as recommended by Kenny et al (Kenny, Kashy et al. 2006).

Data on S/P age was missing for two S/Ps. These couples were included in the confirmatory factor analyses of marital satisfaction and the correlation matrices (n=344) but excluded from the structural equation models using the listwise pair deletion option in Mplus (n=342). No other variables contained missing data.

Analyses were conducted using a general analysis type with a weighted least squares means and variance adjusted (WLSMV) estimator to account for the use of response weights and categorical data and to produce robust findings under normal and non-normal distributions (Byrne 2012). This estimator has also been shown to work well with sample sizes of 200 or greater (Flora and Curran 2004) and can be used for observed variables comprised of 6-7 responses categories such as the DAS-07 (Rhemtulla, Brosseau-Liard et al. 2012). Due to the large variances across mental health measure scores, scores were rescaled to between 1 and 10 by dividing by 3.5 as recommended.[6] Each CFA and SEM was run to 2000 iterations, with 0.00005 convergence criterion for continuous outcomes.[7] Model identification was estimated by checking the number of data points was greater than number of parameters to be estimated in the model and that the analysis terminated successfully.

Standardised SEM parameter estimates and standard errors for the effect of each predictor variable on the outcome were estimated. Test statistics (RMSEA, CFI, TLI) were reported for each CFA and model and used to estimate model fit.

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[6] As recommended by Dr. L. Muthen www.statmodel.com/discussion/messages/11/5266.html?1312503676. Accessed 22 April 2016.

[7] Iterations refer to the repeated refinement of parameter estimates within the model in order to obtain the best fit between the sample matrices and those implied by the model; convergence is reached once no further improvements to the given criterion can be made to estimates for continuous outcomes. Brown, T. and M. Moore (2012). Confirmatory Factor Analysis. Handbook of Structural Equation Modeling. R. Hoyle. New York, The Guilford Press: 361-379.

Summary of S/P mental health and well-being outcomes, measures and data analyses

Table 7 summarises the various outcomes and measures used in thesis and the analytical techniques employed for each.

Table 7: Summary of S/P mental health and well-being outcomes and quantitative data analyses

Outcome	Measure	Caseness	Analyses
Socio-demographic and military profile (objective 1)	S/P socio-demographics Service personnel military characteristics	- -	Pearson's chi-square
Employment (objective 2 and 3)	Employed outside the home Standard Occupational Classification of occupations	Yes/No NS-SEC categories – 3 classes	Pearson's chi-square Logistic regression
Mental health (probable depression, PTSD) (objective 2 and 3)	PHQ-9 PCL-C	Score ≥10 Score ≥44	Pearson's chi-square Median and IQR Negative binomial regression
Alcohol misuse (objective 2 and 3)	AUDIT	Score ≥8 Hazardous alcohol consumption subscale	Pearson's chi-square Logistic regression
Marital satisfaction (objective 2 and 3)	DAS-7	Score <21	Pearson's chi-square Logistic regression Dyadic analyses (SEM)

Chapter 5 – Socio-demographic and military profile of spouses/partners

This chapter describes the socio-demographic profile of spouses and partners (S/Ps) and the military characteristics of Service personnel they are or were in a relationship with (objective 1).

Objectives and hypotheses

The objectives of this chapter were primarily descriptive and intended to place the sample used in this thesis within the context of wider public and military communities: The objectives of this chapter were to:

- describe the socio-demographic profile of S/Ps
- describe the profile of S/Ps according to the military characteristics of Service personnel they are, or were, in a relationship with
- compare the socio-demographic and military profile of S/Ps to general population and military studies

Further details on the data, variables and analytical procedures used in these analyses can be found in Chapter 4 (p152-168).

Results

Socio-demographic profile compared to women in the general UK population

The socio-demographic profile of S/Ps is presented in Table 8. S/Ps ranged in age from 25 to 55 years, with half aged between 35-44 years. The majority were in married or cohabitating relationships and most had one to two children, who were predominately of pre-secondary school age (3-10 years). Living in a town or village away from a military base was the most common residential location for S/Ps; 20.0% reported living in a town or village near a military base and approximately 5% reported living on base or in military housing. The majority of S/Ps residing in England lived in areas classified as urbanised according to English residential postcode data and nearly 60% lived in the two least deprived quintiles according to the IMD (index of multiple deprivation) measure of relative deprivation.

Compared to similar women from the general UK population, a significantly higher proportion of S/Ps were aged 45-55 years, married versus other forms of relationships and had one child

(Table 8). S/Ps were significantly more likely to reside in smaller urban or rural areas and to live in the least deprived IMD quintiles compared to women from the general UK population.

Table 8: Socio-demographic profile of S/Ps compared to women in the general UK population (col %, X^2)

Socio-demographic characteristics	S/Ps % (n)	MCS4[a] % (n)	X^2	df
Age (years)	**N=405**	**N=13193**		
25-34	27.5 (100)	38.7 (4855)		
35-44	50.7 (202)	54.7 (7430)		
45-55	21.8 (90)	6.7 (908)	53.26***	2
Relationship status				
Married	81.2 (337)	63.9 (8766)		
Living with partner/cohabiting	9.6 (28)	-		
Long-term relationship/new relationship/dating	3.1 (11)	-		
No relationship/single	6.1 (18)	23.6 (2791)		
Divorced/separated	-	12.5 (1576)	27.70***	1
Number of children				
1	43.4 (180)	11.7 (1524)		
2	42.1 (172)	46.0 (5955)		
3+	14.6 (53)	42.2 (5713)	153.33***	2
Age of youngest child (years)				
3-10	71.1 (283)	-		
11-18	28.9 (122)	-	-	-
Proximity to military base				
Military housing/on barracks	4.8 (20)	-	-	
In town or village near military base	20.0 (82)	-	-	
In town or village away from military base	69.7 (271)	-	-	
Other	5.5 (21)	-	-	-
Urban/rural residence[b]				
Urban major/minor	15.7 (47)	80.6 (8444)[a]		
Urban city/town	51.8 (147)	9.8 (967)		
Rural town/village or dispersed	32.5 (96)	9.6 (899)	319.66***	2
IMD deprivation quintiles[c]				
1 (Most deprived)	10.6 (27)	21.8 (2245)		

2	12.5 (35)	18.5 (1678)		
3	18.2 (53)	19.5 (1526)		
4	25.7 (69)	19.5 (1448)		
5 (Least deprived)	33.0 (98)	20.7 (1534)	9.59***	4

Missing n=1-4762, ‡p<0.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

[a] Millennium Cohort Study Fourth Study, University of London (2008) [b] MCS4 uses 2005 Rural Urban Morphology Coding, S/Ps samples uses 2011 Rural Urban Morphology Coding [c] Index of Multiple Deprivation (England only)

Profile of Service personnel military characteristics compared to military cohort

More than 60% of S/Ps were affiliated with the Army and NCO (non-commissioned officer) ranks through their current or former relationship with Service personnel (Table 9). Most Service personnel were enlisted in regular Service, still serving in the UK Armed Forces, had experienced deployment to Iraq and/or Afghanistan since 2001 and served for 10 years or longer. 20.6% of military partners of S/Ps had experience of a combat role and 40% reported being separated from their children for a period of two months or longer in the last 2 years.

Table 9: Service personnel military characteristics compared to UK military cohort (col %, X^2)

Service personnel military characteristics	**S/Ps % (n)**	**KCMHR cohort[a] % (n)**	**X^2**	**df**
Service personnel age	**N=405**	**N=8799**		
25-34	22.8 (84)	40.3 (3050)		
35-44	55.4 (221)	40.6 (2897)		
45+	21.7 (100)	19.1 (1373)	21.26***	2
Service				
Royal Navy	13.1 (50)	13.8 (1008)		
Royal Marines	5.6 (21)	3.07 (350)		
Army	64.4 (260)	64.3 (5764)		
Royal Air Force	16.9 (74)	19.3 (1677)	2.25‡	3
Rank				
Officers	19.9 (106)	19.2 (1869)		
NCOs	68.1 (254)	61.3 (4902)		
Other ranks	12.0 (45)	19.5 (2028)	6.72**	2
Engagement type				

Regular	86.9 (348)	90.1 (7413)		
Reserve	13.1 (56)	9.9 (1386)	4.30*	1
Serving status				
Still serving	61.9 (255)	73.6 (6799)		
No longer in Service	38.1 (150)	26.4 (1979)	21.47***	1
Length of service[b]				
0-9 years	15.0 (57)	34.3 (3494)		
10-22 years	55.3 (207)	44.5 (3401)		
>22years	29.8 (127)	21.2 (1588)	28.39***	2
Experience of combat role[a]				
No combat role	79.4 (326)	76.8 (6728)		
Combat role	20.6 (79)	23.2 (2071)	1.15	1
Experience of Iraq/Afghanistan deployment [b]				
No deployment	39.7 (170)	38.5 (2580)		
Deployed	60.3 (235)	61.5 (6219)	0.20	1
Experience of family separation[b]				
No experience	24.7 (101)	-		
>1 month	34.8 (150)	-		
2-4 months	20.8 (81)	-		
> 5 months	19.7 (67)	-	-	-

Missing n=1-1479, ‡p<0.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

[a] King's Centre for Military Health Research Health and Well-being Cohort phase 2 participants

[b] KCMHR cohort phase 2 data updated with information from the Children of Military Fathers' study

Compared to deployable male Service personnel from the KCMHR cohort study, Service personnel with S/Ps in the Children of Military Father's study were significantly more likely to be of NCO rank, enlisted as reserves, have left Service or have served for 10 years or longer. Service personnel associated with S/Ps were significantly less likely to be aged 25-34 compared to the KCMHR cohort. There was no significant difference by Service branch or experience of a combat role or deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan.

Summary

This chapter described the profile of S/Ps included in this thesis according to their own socio-demographic characteristics and the military characteristics of the Service personnel they are

or were in a relationship with. Comparisons were made with community and military studies in order to place this sample within the wider general and military UK populations.

- S/Ps were older, had fewer children, were more likely to be married and lived in less deprived areas than comparable women in the general UK population.
- Service personnel of S/Ps were more likely to be older, hold a NCO rank, have served for 10 years or longer and to have left service than men serving in the deployable UK Armed Forces at the time of the cohort selection.

Chapter 6 – Employment outcomes of spouses/partners

This chapter examines the employment and occupational outcomes of spouses and partners (S/Ps) (objective 2).

Objectives and hypotheses

The objectives of this chapter were to:

- estimate the prevalence of employment among S/Ps and describe the type of work S/Ps do (occupational social class)
- compare the prevalence of this outcome to similar women from the UK general population
- identify associations between S/P employment status and occupational social class and S/P socio-demographics and Service personnel military characteristics

Based on the prior literature concerning S/P employment (Chapter 2, p28), my main hypothesis was that employment would be lower among S/Ps than comparable women in the general UK population, in particular for the S/Ps of Army and non-officer ranked Service personnel compared to S/Ps of Service personnel in other Service branches and officer ranks. My secondary hypotheses were that:

- employment would be higher among older S/Ps then younger S/Ps, S/Ps with older children than S/Ps with younger children and S/Ps living in urban areas compared to S/Ps living in rural areas
- S/Ps of veterans would have higher employment than S/Ps of personnel who remain in Service
- S/Ps would be more likely to be employed in lower occupational social classes than comparable women in the general UK population
- S/P occupational social class would be associated with Service personnel rank, with S/Ps of officers more likely to be of higher occupational social class

To add to the current literature, I examined how employment among S/Ps was related to:

- Service personnel's experience of combat role
- Service personnel's experience of deployment
- family separation due to absence of Service personnel

Further details on the data, variables and analytical procedures used in the analyses can be found in Chapter 4 (p152-172).

Results

Prevalence of employment among S/Ps compared to women in the general UK population

Overall, 70.3% of S/Ps were employed outside the home, significantly more than similar women in the general UK population (Table 10). This difference was partially accounted for by age in the two samples (unadj. OR 0.69 (95% CI 0.55-0.87), adj. OR (0.76 95%CI 0.60-0.96)).

S/P employment status differed according to the serving status of the Service personnel; S/Ps of ex-Service personnel were significantly more likely to be employed outside the home then S/Ps of personnel who remained in Service (Table 30, Appendix 2, Pearson X^2=9.78, df (1), p<0.01). The sample was therefore stratified by serving status and compared to similar women in the general UK population in order to explore employment outcomes among S/Ps of current members of the UK Armed Forces. S/Ps of personnel who had left Service were significantly less likely to be economically inactive after adjusting for age than similar women in the general population (adj. OR 0.45 (95% CI 0.28-0.70)) (Table 10). There was no significant difference in employment outside the home between S/Ps of currently serving personnel and comparable women in the general UK population.

S/P employment and associations with S/P socio-demographics and Service personnel military characteristics

Due to the difference in S/P employment outcomes by the serving status of Service personnel, the following analyses were conducted using data from S/Ps of Service personnel who were still in Service.

After adjusting for S/P socio-demographic variables found to be statistically significant in univariable analyses of employment among S/Ps of currently serving Service personnel, S/Ps who reported living near or on military bases were significantly more likely to be economically inactive than those who reported living away from military bases (adj. OR 1.84 (95% CI 1.05-3.23)) (Table 11); S/P age was not significantly associated with employment after adjustment. After adjusting for S/P age and Service personnel military characteristics statistically significant in univariable analyses of employment among S/Ps of currently serving Service personnel, S/Ps of personnel serving in non-Army branches of the military were significantly less to be economically inactive than S/Ps of Army personnel (adj. OR 0.45 (95% CI 0.24-0.84)) (Table 11). S/Ps of reservist personnel were also significantly less likely to be unemployed than those of

regular personnel (adj. OR 0.28 (95% CI 0.08-0.96)). Other military characteristics were not associated with employment status after adjustment.

Table 10: Prevalence of S/P employment and occupational social class compared to women in the general UK population (col %, X^2, OR, 95% CI)

Employment and occupation outcomes	S/Ps % (n)	MCS4[a] % (n)	X^2	df	Unadj OR. (95% CI)[b]	Adj. OR (95% CI)[c]
Employed outside the home - overall	**N=405**	**N=13193**				
Yes	70.3 (274)				1.0	1.0
No	29.7 (120)		10.05**	1	0.69 (0.55-0.87)	0.76 (0.60-0.96)
S/Ps of current Service personnel						
Yes	64.2 (158)	62.0 (8258)			-	-
No	36.1 (91)	38.0 (4935)	0.47	1	-	-
S/Ps of former Service personnel						
Yes	80.4 (116)				1.0	1.0
No	19.6 (29)		16.95***	1	0.40 (0.25-0.63)	0.45 (0.28-0.70)
Occupational social class						
Managerial/professional	34.3 (88)	30.9 (3874)			1.0	1.0
Intermediate	40.8 (106)	27.4 (3272)			1.34 (0.97-1.86)	1.48 (1.06-2.06)
Routine & manual	24.9 (62)	41.7 (4984)	13.97***	2	0.54 (0.37-0.78)	0.65 (0.44-0.97)

Missing n=5-1063, ‡p<0.10 *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

[a] Millennium Cohort Study Fourth Study, University of London (2008) [b] Baseline data = MCS4 cohort, employed outside the home, managerial/professional occupations [c] Adjusted for age

Table 11: Associations between S/P employment status, S/P socio-demographics and Service personnel military characteristics – S/Ps of currently serving personnel (row %, X^2, OR, 95% CI)

Socio-demographic variables	Current S/Ps employment outside the home row % (N)		X^2	df	Unadj. OR (95% CI)[a]	Adj. OR (95% CI)[b]
	Employed 63.9% (N=158)	Not employed 36.1% (N=92)				
S/P age (years)						
25-34	51.5 (34)	48.5 (34)			1.0	1.0
35-44	67.9 (85)	32.1 (42)			0.50 (0.27-0.95)	0.59 (0.31-1.13)
45-55	73.6 (38)	26.4 (15)	3.77*	2	0.38 (0.17-0.84)	0.50 (0.20-1.22)
Proximity to military base						
In town, village away from base	69.7 (106)	30.3 (48)			1.0	1.0
Military housing/town near base	55.0 (50)	45.0 (41)	5.10*	1	1.88 (1.08-3.27)	1.84 (1.05-3.23)
Urban/rural residence						
Major/minor urban, city/town	65.9 (74)	34.1 (40)			-	-
Rural town/village, dispersed	64.6 (41)	35.4 (25)	0.03	1	-	-
Number of children						
1	65.5 (71)	34.6 (38)			-	-
2 or more	63.2 (87)	36.9 (53)	0.13	1	-	-
Age of youngest child (years)						
3-10	59.5 (105)	40.5 (73)			1.0	1.0
11-18	76.4 (53)	23.6 (18)	6.29*	1	0.45 (0.24-0.85)	0.62 (0.31-1.24)
Relationship status						

Married	64.3 (140)	35.8 (79)			-	-
Other	73.9 (15)	26.1 (6)	0.73	1	-	-
Service personnel military characteristics			**X^2**	**df**	**Unadj. OR (95% CI)[a]**	**Adj. OR (95% CI)[c]**
Service						
Army	58.0 (88)	42.0 (68)			1.0	1.0
RAF/RM/RN	75.4 (70)	24.6 (23)	7.32**	1	0.45 (0.25-0.81)	0.45 (0.24-0.84)
Rank						
Officers	57.9 (41)	42.1 (29)			-	-
NCOs/other ranks	65.9 (117)	34.1 (63)	1.36	1	-	-
Engagement type						
Regular status	62.0 (134)	38.0 (87)			1.0	1.0
Reserve status	82.8 (24)	17.2 (4)	3.54‡	1	0.34 (0.10-1.10)	0.28 (0.08-0.96)
Length of service						
0-9 years	44.0 (12)	56.0 (15)			2.17 (0.92-5.10)	2.07 (0.83-5.13)
10-22 years	63.0 (87)	37.0 (55)			1.0	1.0
>22years	74.3 (59)	25.7 (21)	4.01*	2	0.59 (0.32-1.09)	0.77 (0.38-1.54)
Experience of combat role						
No combat role	66.4 (130)	33.6 (68)			-	-
Combat role	55.8 (28)	44.2 (23)	1.85	1	-	-
Deployment to Iraq and /or Afghanistan						
No deployment	67.9 (47)	32.1 (23)			-	-

Deployed	62.9 (111)	37.1 (69)	0.53	1	-	-
Experience of family separation						
No experience	65.4 (81)	34.6 (43)			-	-
≥2 months	62.7 (74)	37.3 (47)	0.18	1	-	-

Missing=1-69 ‡p<0.10 *p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

[a] Baseline categories S/P age 25-34 years, employed outside the home, residing in town, village away from base, residing in major/minor urban/city/town, having 1 child, youngest child aged 3-10 years, married, Army, officer rank, regular engagement type, still serving, 10-22 years of Service, no experience of combat, no experience of deployment, no experience of family separation in last 2 years

[b] Adjusted for S/P age, S/P proximity to military base, S/P age of youngest child (years) [c] Adjusted for S/P age, Service, Service personnel engagement type, Service personnel length of Service

S/P occupational areas

S/Ps were employed in a variety of occupational areas but primarily worked in education, health, science and social care, administration and customer services and retail (Table 12). Other common areas of employment included finance, law and business and the civil service.

Table 12: List of S/P occupational areas

Occupational area	Example of occupations	N
Education	Teaching assistant, teacher, university lecturer	54
Health, science and social care	Care assistant, health visitor, dispensing technician, nurse, doctor, physiotherapist/ occupational therapy, management, laboratory technician	48
Administration	Administrator, secretary, office manager	36
Other	Flight attendants, hairdressing, architect	32
Customer services, retail	Customer assistant, checkout operator, sales assistant	31
Finance, law and business	Accountancy, legal clerk, company director, HR advisor, contracts manager	19
Civil service	Civil servant, government officer	11
Food services	Catering assistant, chef, dinner lady	10
Childcare	Child minder, nursery nurse	8
Self-employed	Freelance or own business	8
Police	Police officer, communications operator	7
Real estate	Estate agent, property assistant	5
Military	UK Armed Forces	5
Domestic services	Cleaner, housekeeper	4
Charities	Fundraising, charity manager	3

NB: Occupations include those who may not currently be employed outside the home as they were taking care of children

Three-quarters of S/Ps had previously or currently worked in managerial, professional or intermediate occupations (Table 10). After adjusting for age, significantly more S/Ps were working or had previously worked in intermediate occupations than in managerial occupations compared to similar women in the general UK population (adj. OR 1.48 (95% CI 1.06-2.06), while significantly fewer S/Ps were working or had previously worked in routine or manual

occupations than in managerial occupations compared to similar women in the general population (adj. OR 0.65 (95% CI 0.44-0.97).

S/P occupational social class and associations with S/P socio-demographics and Service personnel military characteristics

Occupational social class was not associated with any S/P socio-demographic variables, although relationship status approached statistical significance (p=0.08) (Table 31, Appendix 2). S/Ps of personnel serving in NCO or other ranks were significantly more likely to work in routine or manual occupations than S/Ps of officers (Table 13). The association between S/P occupational social class and Service personnel's experience of deployment approached statistical significance (p=0.052). Due to low numbers in some of the groups, further analyses were not conducted.

Table 13: Associations between S/P occupational social class and Service personnel military characteristics (row %, X^2)

Service personnel military characteristics	**NS-SEC occupational social class, row % (N)**			**X^2**	**df**
Service	**Managerial/ professional 34.3% (N=88)**	**Intermediate 40.8% (N=106)**	**Routine & manual 24.9% (N=62)**		
Army	30.5 (47)	42.0 (63)	27.5 (39)		
RAF/RM/RN	39.6 (41)	39.2 (43)	21.2 (23)	1.08	2
Rank					
Officers	52.7 (31)	37.1 (22)	10.2 (6)		
NCOs/other ranks	30.5 (57)	41.6 (84)	27.9 (56)	5.88**	2
Engagement type					
Regular	33.7 (72)	41.8 (90)	24.4 (50)		
Reserves	38.2 (16)	33.8 (15)	28.0 (12)	0.44	2
Serving status					
Still serving	29.6 (44)	42.1 (59)	28.3 (39)		
No longer in Service	40.0 (44)	39.3 (47)	20.7 (23)	1.46	2
Length of service					
0-9 years	46.2 (14)	27.8 (8)	26.0 (8)		
10-22 years	32.3 (43)	43.5 (59)	24.3 (30)		

>22years	31.8 (30)	41.6 (38)	26.6 (24)	0.72	4
Experience of combat role					
No combat role	33.0 (68)	39.9 (90)	27.1 (57)		
Combat role	40.4 (20)	45.6 (16)	14.0 (5)	1.23	2
Experience of deployment					
No deployment	43.2 (47)	33.8 (44)	22.9 (25)		
Deployed	27.6 (41)	46.1 (62)	26.4 (37)	2.98‡	2
Experience of family separation					
No experience	35.9 (65)	39.2 (68)	24.9 (39)		
≥2 months	31.5 (22)	44.0 (37)	24.5 (22)	0.23	2

Missing=1-14 ‡p<0.10 *p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

Summary

This chapter examined the employment and occupational outcomes of S/Ps.

- The prevalence of employment outside the home among S/Ps of currently serving personnel was comparable to similar women from the general UK population in contrast to my hypothesis.
- The job titles of S/Ps indicated the occupations of S/Ps were concentrated in particular sectors, such as education, administration and health care.
- S/Ps were less likely to be employed in routine or manual work but more likely to work in roles requiring intermediate levels of skill than similar women from the general UK population.
- No association was found between S/P employment and the age of S/Ps or the age of their youngest child. Both variables were associated with S/P employment in univariable regression analyses but were not once other significant factors were taken into account in multivariate models. These findings are in contrast to my hypotheses.
- S/Ps of Army and regular Service personnel had poorer employment outcomes than other groups while the employment outcomes of S/Ps improved after personnel left Service. The finding relating to S/Ps of Army Service personnel supports my hypothesis.
- A significant association between rank and occupational social class was found in support of my hypothesis but this was not associated with employment.

- No association was found between S/P employment and urban or rural residence in contrast to my hypothesis but S/Ps who reported living near to or on military bases were significantly more likely to not be working outside the home than those living away from bases.

Chapter 7 – Mental health among spouses/partners

This chapter examines the mental health (probable depression and probable PTSD) of spouses and partners (S/Ps) (objective 3).

Objectives and hypotheses

The objectives of this chapter were to:

- estimate the prevalence of probable depression and PTSD among S/Ps
- compare the prevalence estimates of these outcomes to similar women in the UK general population
- identify associations between S/P probable depression and PTSD and S/P socio-demographics, Service personnel military characteristics and Service personnel mental health

In line with previous international research (Chapter 2, p34, p52) I hypothesised that:

- the prevalence of probable depression would be higher among S/Ps than women in the general population
- the prevalence of probable PTSD among S/Ps would be similar to women in the general population
- employment, occupational social class and marital status would be related to S/P probable depression as in general population studies
- the prevalence of probable depression and PTSD would be higher among S/Ps of Service personnel of non-officer rank compared to S/Ps of Service personnel of officer rank
- the prevalence of probable depression and PTSD would be higher among S/Ps of Service personnel with experience of combat role compared to S/Ps of Service personnel without combat experience
- S/P probable depression would be associated with longer periods of family separation due to the absence of Service personnel
- S/P probable depression and PTSD would be associated with Service personnel probable depression and PTSD

To contribute to the lack of evidence in the current field of literature on mental health among S/Ps, I examined how probable depression and probable PTSD were related to;

- S/P socio-demographics such as age, number and age of children and geographical location
- Service personnel military characteristics such as Service and engagement type

Further details on the data, variables and analytical procedures used in the analyses can be found in Chapter 4 (p152-172).

Results

Prevalence of probable depression and PTSD among S/Ps compared to women in the general English population

Less than 10% of spouses and partners (S/Ps) met PHQ-9 criteria for probable moderate or severe depression or PCL-C criteria for probable PTSD (Table 14). A significantly higher proportion of S/Ps met criteria for probable moderate or severe depression than comparable women from the English general population. There was no significant difference in the prevalence of probable PTSD between the two groups.

Table 14: Prevalence of probable depression and PTSD among S/Ps compared to women in the general English population (col %, X^2)

Probable depression and PTSD caseness	**S/Ps % (N)**	**APMS[a] % (N)**	**X^2**	**df**
	N=405	**N=1595**		
Probable depression (PHQ-9)				
No/mild depression	92.9 (366)	95.8 (1532)		
Moderate/severe depression	7.2 (28)	3.2 (63)	12.03***	1
Probable PTSD (PCL-C)				
No	93.6 (374)	95.9 (1504)		
Yes	6.4 (20)	4.1 (71)	1.84	1

Missing=11-24 ‡p<0.10 *p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001 [a] McManus et al (2009).

S/Ps meeting criteria for probable depression were significantly more likely to report finding daily activities and social relationships somewhat, very or extremely difficult to complete than S/Ps not meeting criteria (Table 15).

Table 15: Probable depression and functional impairment among S/Ps (col %, X^2)

Impaired function	No/mild depression % (N)	Moderate/severe depression % (N)	X^2	df
	N=366	N=28		
Not difficult	68.0 (190)	20.9 (5)		
Somewhat/very/extremely difficult	32.1 (85)	79.1 (23)	19.34***	1

Missing N=11 ‡p<0.10 *p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

S/P probable depression and PTSD and associations with S/P socio-demographics and Service personnel military characteristics

Negative binomial regression models were used to explore PHQ-9 and PCL-C scores according to S/P socio-demographics and Service personnel military characteristics due to the low number of cases (Table 16).

The median PHQ-9 score was 2 (IQR=0-5). No S/P socio-demographics or Service personnel military characteristics were significantly associated with S/P depression measure scores. An association approaching statistical significance was found for increasing PHQ-9 measure scores and residential proximity to military bases after adjusting for S/P age and employment (p=0.091).

The median PCL-C score was 20 (IQR=17-27). No associations with S/P PCL-C scores were found according to S/P socio-demographic variables or Service personnel military characteristics in negative binomial regression models after adjusting for variables significant at p<0.10 (Table 16).

Table 16: Associations between S/P PHQ-9 and PCL-C scores, S/P socio-demographics and Service personnel military characteristics (IRR)

Variables of interest	Unadj. PHQ-9 score IRR (95% CI)[a]	Adj. PHQ-9 score IRR (95% CI)[b]	Unadj. PCL-C score IRR (95% CI)[a]	Adj. PCL-C score IRR (95% CI)[c]
Socio-demographic variables				
S/P age	1.16 (0.95 -1.43)	1.12 (0.93-1.35)	1.25 (0.95-1.64)	-
Employed outside the home	0.76 (0.57-1.01)[‡]	0.87 (0.68-1.11)	0.81 (0.56-1.16)	-
Proximity to military base	1.23 (0.98 -1.57)[‡]	1.24 (0.97-1.60)[‡]	0.90 (0.64-1.25)	-
Urban/rural residence	0.92 (0.67-1.26)	-	0.79 (0.52-1.22)	-
No. of children	0.90 (0.69-1.17)	-	0.84 (0.59-1.21)	-
Age of youngest child	1.21 (0.94-1.55)	-	1.07 (0.78-1.48)	-
Relationship status	0.87 (0.55-1.37)	-	1.43 (0.67-3.06)	-
Occupational social class		-		
Managerial & Professional/Intermediate	1.0	-	1.0	-
Routine & manual	1.18 (0.86-1.61)	-	1.03 (0.66-1.59)	-
Unemployed	1.30 (0.94-1.80)	-	1.15 (0.74-1.79)	-
Military variables		-		
Service	1.18 (0.90-1.57)	-	1.34 (0.91-1.97)	-
Rank	1.13 (0.88-1.46)	-	1.13 (0.82-1.57)	-
Engagement type	0.93 (0.68-1.28)	-	1.01 (0.69-1.46)	-
Serving status	1.09 (0.82-1.45)	-	1.37 (0.94-2.00)[‡]	1.17 (0.86-1.58)
Length of service	1.04 (0.88-1.22)	-	0.95 (0.76-1.18)	-
Combat role	0.76 (0.56-1.04)[‡]	0.78 (0.58-1.05)	0.76 (0.53-1.09)	-

Experience of deployment	0.81 (0.63-1.06)	-	0.71 (0.49-1.01)‡	0.81 (0.60-1.08)
Family separation	0.92 (0.71-1.18)	-	1.04 (0.70-1.54)	-

Missing=1-115 ‡p<0.10 *p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001 PCL-C scores were transformed around zero

[a] Baseline categories S/P age 25-34 years, not employed outside the home, residing in town, village away from base, residing in major/minor urban/city/town, having 1 child, youngest child aged 3-10 years, married, managerial & professional occupational social class, Army, officer rank, regular engagement type, still serving, 10-22 years of Service, no experience of combat, no experience of deployment, no experience of family separation in last 2 years

[b] Model 1 adjusted for S/P age, S/P employment & S/P proximity to military base, model 2 adjusted for S/P age & Service personnel experience of combat role [c] Adjusted for S/P age, personnel ex-Service status & Service personnel experience of combat role

S/P probable depression and PTSD and associations with Service personnel probable depression and PTSD

S/P probable PTSD was significantly associated with Service personnel probable depression in military couples ($p<0.01$) and an association approaching significance was found between S/P and Service personnel probable depression ($p=0.07$) (Table 17). No cases of S/P probable depression or PTSD were associated with Service personnel probable PTSD (Table 32, Appendix 2).

Table 17: Associations between S/P and Service personnel mental health (col %, X^2)

	S/P probable depression % (N)		**X^2**	**df**
Service personnel probable depression	**No/mild depression**	**Moderate/severe depression**		
No/mild depression	88.1 (285)	74.7 (17)		
Moderate/severe depression	11.9 (36)	25.3 (6)	3.42‡	1
	S/P probable PTSD % (N)			
Probable PTSD (PCL-C)	**No (PCL-C ≤43)**	**Yes (PCL-C ≥44)**		
No (PCL-C ≤49)	94.8 (312)	100 (15)		
Yes (PCL-C ≥50)	5.2 (17)	0 (0)	0.83	1
	S/P probable PTSD % (N)			
Service personnel probable depression	**No (PCL-C ≤43)**	**Yes (PCL-C ≥44)**		
No/mild depression	88.3 (291)	65.9 (11)		
Moderate/severe depression	11.7 (36)	34.1 (6)	7.18**	1

Based on 344 couples ‡p<0.10 *p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

Summary

This chapter examined the mental health of spouses and partners (S/Ps), with a focus on probable depression and probable PTSD.

- The prevalence of probable depression was significantly higher among S/Ps than comparable women in the general English population in support of my hypothesis.
- The prevalence of probable PTSD was comparable between S/Ps and women in the general population in support of my hypotheses.
- No socio-demographic or military factors were significantly associated with depression or PTSD measure scores in partial contrast with some of my hypotheses.

- Service personnel probable depression was associated with S/P probable PTSD but probable depression and probable PTSD were not associated between military couple members. These findings partly supported my hypotheses.

Chapter 8 – Alcohol misuse among spouses/partners

This chapter examines alcohol misuse of spouses and partners (S/Ps) (objective 3).

Objectives and hypotheses

The objectives of this chapter were to:

- estimate the prevalence of alcohol misuse among S/Ps
- compare the prevalence estimate of alcohol misuse to similar women in the UK general population
- identify associations between S/P alcohol misuse and S/P socio-demographics, Service personnel military characteristics and Service personnel mental health

Due to the lack of previous international research in this area, it is difficult to form hypotheses in relation to the prevalence of alcohol misuse among S/Ps (Chapter 2, p40). Given the evidence, I hypothesised that:

- S/P alcohol misuse will be associated with S/P age, marital status, the presence of children, Service personnel rank

To contribute to the scarcity of evidence in the current field of literature on alcohol misuse among S/Ps, I examined how this outcome was related to:

- S/P socio-demographics such as age, number and age of children and geographical location
- Service personnel military characteristics such as Service, engagement type, deployment, combat, length of Service and family separation

Further details on the data, variables and analytical procedures used in the analyses can be found in Chapter 4 (p152-172).

Results

Prevalence of alcohol misuse and hazardous alcohol consumption among S/Ps compared to women in the general English population

The majority of S/Ps did not meet AUDIT score criteria for alcohol misuse; 84.6% met criteria for little or no risk (score ≤7), 13.5% for medium risk (score 8-15), and 1.9% for high risk or probable dependence (score 16+) (Table 18). There was no significant difference in alcohol misuse between S/Ps and comparable women from the English general population.

Analysis of AUDIT subscales indicated 78.4% of S/Ps met item thresholds indicating hazardous alcohol consumption, 15.1% for alcohol dependence and 26.4% for alcohol-related harm (Table 18). No significant differences were found between the prevalence of alcohol dependence or alcohol-related harm AUDIT sub-scales among S/Ps and similar women in the general English population.

S/Ps were significantly more likely to meet item thresholds for the AUDIT sub-scale for hazardous alcohol consumption (AUDIT items 2 and 3) compared to similar women from the English general population, an association that remained after adjustment for potential covariates (adj. OR 2.24 (95% CI 1.68-3.00)). S/Ps were significantly less likely to consume alcoholic beverages 2-3 times/week or more (adj. OR 0.57 (95% CI 0.42-0.78)) (AUDIT item 1) but when this sub-scale was broken down into its component items, S/Ps were significantly more likely to consume a higher number of standard drinks (adj. OR 2.07 (95% CI 1.60-2.67)), a relationship that persisted when a higher number of standard drinks was used. Binge-drinking (consumption of 6 or more drinks in one session) at any frequency was significantly higher for S/Ps than similar women in the general English population. All associations remained significant after adjusting for potential covariates.

S/P alcohol misuse, hazardous alcohol consumption and associations with S/P socio-demographics and Service personnel military characteristics

After adjusting for S/P socio-demographic variables significant in univariable analyses, S/Ps aged 45-55 years were significantly less likely to meet criteria for alcohol misuse (AUDIT ≥8) than the youngest age group (adj. OR 0.23 (95% CI 0.07-0.79)), while S/Ps living in rural areas were significantly more likely to meet AUDIT score criteria for alcohol misuse than those living in urban areas (adj. OR 2.29 (95% CI 1.08-4.87)) (Table 19). After adjusting for S/P age and Service personnel military characteristics significant in univariable analyses, S/Ps of Service personnel who experienced a period of family separation longer than 2 months were significantly more likely to meet criteria for alcohol misuse (AUDIT ≥8) than S/Ps of Service personnel who did not experience such separations (adj. OR 1.99 (95% CI 1.07-3.71)).

After adjusting for S/P socio-demographic variables significant in univariable analyses, S/Ps aged 45 years and over were less likely to meet criteria for the AUDIT sub-scale for hazardous alcohol consumption compared to the youngest age group (adj. OR 0.41 (95% CI 0.18-0.93)), while S/Ps employed outside the home were significantly more likely to consume alcohol in a hazardous way than S/Ps who were not employed (adj. OR 1.95 (95% CI 1.11-3.44)) (Table 20). S/Ps who were in the long-term unemployed occupational social class were significantly less

likely to consume alcohol in a hazardous way than those working in managerial or professional occupations after adjusting for S/P age (adj. OR 0.49 (95% CI 0.26-0.91) – there were no significant differences in hazardous consumption between occupational categories of S/Ps. After adjusting for S/P age and Service personnel military characteristics significant in univariable analyses, hazardous consumption of alcohol was significantly higher amongst S/Ps of Service personnel of NCO or other ranks compared to S/Ps of officers (adj. OR 2.40 (95% CI 1.32-4.36)) and approaching significance among S/Ps who experienced a period of family separation longer than 2 months (p=0.073).

S/P alcohol misuse and associations with Service personnel alcohol misuse

There was no significant association between the alcohol misuse of S/Ps (AUDIT≥8) and Service personnel (AUDIT≥16) in military couples (Table 32, Appendix 2).

Table 18: Prevalence of S/P alcohol misuse outcomes compared to women in the general English population (col %, X^2, OR, 95% CI)

AUDIT alcohol misuse outcomes	S/Ps % (N)	APMS[a] % (N)	X^2	df	Unadj. OR (95% CI)[b]	Adj. OR (95% CI)[c]
AUDIT score categories	**N=405**	**N=1595**				
Little or no risk (≥7)	84.6 (337)	86.2 (1356)			-	-
Medium risk (8-15)	13.5 (51)	11.8 (201)			-	-
High risk or probable dependence (≥16)	1.9 (6)	2.0 (38)	0.35	2	-	-
AUDIT subscales - item thresholds						
Hazardous alcohol consumption (AUDIT 2-3)						
No hazardous use (0)	21.6 (80)	40.4 (501)			1.0	1.0
Probable hazardous use (≥1)	78.4 (270)	59.6 (795)	39.47***	1	2.46 (1.85-3.29)	2.24 (1.68-3.00)
Alcohol dependence (AUDIT 4-6)						
No dependence (0)	84.9 (301)	84.2 (819)			-	-
Probable alcohol dependence (≥1)	15.1 (49)	15.8 (160)	0.08	1	-	-
Alcohol-related harm (AUDIT 7-10)						
No alcohol-related harm (0)	73.6 (262)	69.5 (669)			-	-
Probable alcohol-related harm (≥1)	26.4 (88)	30.5 (310)	1.72	1	-	-
Individual AUDIT questions (AUDIT 1-3)						
Frequency of alcoholic drink in past year						
Never-monthly	39.2 (147)	40.0 (429)			1.0	1.0
2-4 times/month	29.4 (118)	26.8 (381)			0.87 (0.64-1.17)	0.81 (0.59-1.11)
2-3 times/week or more	31.4 (129)	42.2 (598)	7.04***	2	0.59 (0.44-0.79)	0.57 (0.42-0.78)
Number of standard drinks per typical session						

1-2	45.6 (165)	63.3 (793)			1.0	1.0
3 or more	54.4 (185)	36.7 (503)	32.13***	1	2.06 (1.60-2.65)	2.07 (1.60-2.67)
Binge-drinking - ≥6 units on one occasion						
Never	25.3 (95)	46.0 (576)			1.0	1.0
<Monthly, monthly	65.0 (224)	45.1 (599)			2.62 (1.98-3.46)	2.34 (1.76-3.11)
Weekly, daily, almost daily	9.7 (31)	8.9 (124)	22.38***	2	1.98 (1.22-3.21)	1.83 (1.13-2.97)

Missing=11-619 ‡p<0.10 *p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

[a] McManus et al (2009). Adult Psychiatric Morbidity in England, 2007: Results of a Household Survey. London: National Centre for Social Research.

[b] Baseline data = APMS [c] Adjusted for S/P, APMS participant age, number of children (1, 2+) & employment (no, yes)

Table 19: Associations between S/P alcohol misuse (AUDIT ≥8), S/P socio-demographics and Service personnel military characteristics (row %, X^2, OR, 95% CI)

Socio-demographic variables	Alcohol misuse (AUDIT ≥8) row % (N)		X^2	df	Unadj. OR (95% CI)[a]	Adj. OR (95% CI)
Age (years)	**No alcohol misuse 84.7% (N=337)**	**Alcohol misuse 15.3% (N=57)**				
25-34	80.4 (84)	19.6 (16)			1.0	1.0[b]
35-44	83.4 (169)	16.6 (33)			0.82 (0.40-1.69)	0.69 (0.30-1.60)
45-55	92.4 (82)	7.6 (8)	2.40‡	2	0.34 (0.13-0.89)	0.23 (0.07-0.79)
Employed outside the home						
Yes	84.5 (235)	15.5 (39)			-	-
No	84.9 (102)	15.1 (18)	0.01	1	-	-
Occupational social class						
Managerial & Professional/Intermediate	86.4 (171)	13.6 (23)			-	-
Routine & manual	77.0 (48)	23.0 (14)			-	-
Not employed	87.0 (97)	13.0 (16)	1.70	2	-	-
Residence						
In town, village away from base	84.0 (232)	16.0 (39)			-	-
Military housing/town near base	85.3 (87)	14.7 (15)	0.09	1	-	-
Urban/rural residence						
Major/minor urban, city/town	89.0 (170)	11.0 (20)			1.0	1.0[b]
Rural town/village, dispersed	76.6 (76)	23.5 (19)	5.74*	1	2.47 (1.16, 5.27)	2.29 (1.08, 4.87)

Number of children						
1	83.6 (157)	16.4 (30)			-	-
2 or more	85.7 (180)	14.3 (27)	0.27	1	-	-
Age of youngest child (years)						
3-10	85.3 (237)	14.7 (38)			-	-
11-18	82.9 (100)	17.1 (19)	0.30	1	-	-
Relationship status						
Married	85.6 (290)	14.4 (47)			-	-
Other	81.5 (33)	18.5 (6)	0.29	1	-	-
Military variables						
Service						
Army	82.4 (211)	17.6 (39)			-	-
RAF/RM/RN	88.5 (126)	11.5 (18)	2.37	1	-	-
Rank						
Officers	87.3 (87)	12.7 (13)			-	-
NCOs/other ranks	84.0 (250)	16.0 (44)	0.61	1	-	-
Engagement type						
Regular	83.8 (286)	16.2 (51)			-	-
Reserve	89.9 (50)	10.1 (6)	1.36	1	-	-
Serving status						
Still serving	84.8 (214)	15.2 (35)			-	-
No longer in Service	84.3 (123)	15.7 (22)	0.01	1	-	-
Length of service						

0-9 years	84.7 (49)	15.3 (8)			-	-
10-22 years	84.6 (177)	15.4 (30)			-	-
>22years	86.0 (109)	14.0 (18)	0.05	2	-	-
Experience of combat role						
No experience	84.9 (271)	15.1 (45)			-	-
Experience of combat role	83.6 (66)	16.4 (12)	0.07	1	-	-
Experience of deployment						
No experience	85.8 (144)	14.2 (23)			-	-
Experience of deployment	83.9 (193)	16.2 (34)	0.22	1	-	-
Experience of family separation						
No experience	88.7 (217)	11.3 (26)			1.0	1.0[c]
≥2 months	78.2 (114)	21.8 (31)	6.24*	1	2.19 (1.17-4.09)	1.99 (1.07-3.71)

Missing =1-115 ‡p<0.10 *p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

[a] Baseline categories S/P age 25-34 years, employed outside the home, managerial & professional occupational social class, residing in town, village away from base, residing in major/minor urban/city/town, having 1 child, youngest child aged 3-10 years, married, Army, officer rank, regular engagement type, still serving, 10-22 years of Service, no experience of combat, no experience of deployment, no experience of family separation in last 2 years

[b] Adjusted for S/P age & S/P urban-rural residence [c] Adjusted for S/P age & Service personnel experience of family separation in last 2 years

Table 20: Associations between S/P hazardous alcohol consumption (AUDIT subscale), S/P socio-demographics and Service personnel military characteristics (row %, X^2, OR, 95% CI)

Socio-demographic variables	AUDIT – Hazardous consumption row % (N)		X^2	df	Unadj. OR (95% CI)[a]	Adj. OR (95% CI)
Age (years)	**Non-hazardous use 21.6% (N=80)**	**Hazardous use 78.4% (N=270)**				
25-34	14.5 (13)	85.5 (70)			1.0	1.0[b]
35-44	23.3 (45)	76.7 (138)			0.56 (0.27-1.14)	0.49 (0.24-1.01)
45-55	26.9 (22)	73.1 (60)	1.98	2	0.46 (0.20-1.04)	0.41 (0.18-0.93)
Employed outside the home						
No	28.6 (30)	71.4 (73)			1.0	1.0[b]
Yes	18.7 (50)	81.3 (197)	3.93*	1	1.75 (1.00-3.04)	1.95 (1.11-3.44)
Occupational social class						
Managerial & Professional/Intermediate	17.7 (34)	82.3 (138)			1.0	1.0[c]
Routine & manual	14.6 (9)	85.4 (47)			1.26 (0.55-2.85)	1.17 (0.51-2.69)
Not employed	28.5 (28)	71.5 (70)	2.89‡	2	0.54 (0.29-0.99)	0.49 (0.26-0.91)
Residence						
In town, village away from base	21.0 (55)	79.0 (188)			-	-
Military housing/town near base	22.3 (21)	77.7 (67)	0.06	1	-	-
Urban/rural residence						
Major/minor urban, city/town	25.2 (41)	74.9 (122)			-	-
Rural town/village, dispersed	25.1 (25)	74.9 (63)	0.00	1	-	-

Number of children						
1	18.0 (31)	82.0 (133)			-	-
2 or more	24.9 (49)	75.1 (137)	2.34	1	-	-
Age of youngest child (years)						
3-11	22.6 (59)	77.4 (185)			-	-
12-18	19.1 (21)	80.9 (85)	0.49	1	-	-
Relationship status						
Married	21.8 (70)	78.2 (229)			-	-
Other	17.3 (5)	82.7 (28)	0.29	1	-	-
Military variables						
Service						
Army	19.5 (46)	80.5 (170)			-	-
RAF/RM/RN	25.1 (34)	74.9 (100)	1.44	1	-	-
Rank						
Officers	36.1 (33)	63.9 (60)			1.0	1.0[d]
NCOs/other ranks	17.8 (47)	82.2 (210)	12.59***	1	2.60 (1.51-4.47)	2.40 (1.32-4.36)
Engagement type						
Regular	21.4 (69)	78.6 (231)			-	-
Reserve	23.0 (11)	77.1 (38)	0.05	1	-	-
Serving status						
Still serving	21.9 (51)	78.1 (166)			-	-
No longer in Service	21.0 (29)	79.0 (104)	0.04	1	-	-
Length of service						

0-9 years	19.8 (10)	80.2 (36)			-	-
10-22 years	19.7 (40)	80.3 (149)			-	-
>22years	26.7 (30)	73.3 (83)	1.01	1	-	-
Experience of combat role						
No experience	21.3 (62)	78.7 (217)			-	-
Experience of combat role	22.5 (18)	77.6 (53)	0.04	1	-	-
Experience of deployment						
No experience	22.3 (35)	77.7 (116)			-	-
Experience of deployment	21.1 (45)	78.9 (154)	0.07	1	-	-
Experience of family separation						
No experience	25.2 (58)	74.8 (161)			1.0	1.0[d]
≥2 months	15.8 (21)	84.2 (106)	3.92*	1	1.80 (1.00-3.23)	1.72 (0.95-3.10)

Missing =1-115 ‡p<0.10 *p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

[a] Baseline categories S/P age 25-34 years, not employed outside the home, managerial & professional occupational social class, residing in town, village away from base, residing in major/minor urban/city/town, having 1 child, youngest child aged 3-10 years, married, Army, officer rank, regular engagement type, still serving, 10-22 years of Service, no experience of combat, no experience of deployment, no experience of family separation in last 2 years

[b] Adjusted for S/P employment & S/P age [c] Adjusted for S/P age & S/P occupational social class [d] Adjusted for S/P age, Service personnel rank, Service personnel experience of family separation in last 2 years

Mental health comorbidities among S/Ps

The majority of S/Ps did not meet criteria for either probable depression, probable PTSD or alcohol misuse (Table 21); 18.4% met criteria for one mental health outcome, mostly alcohol misuse, and 5.3% met criteria for two mental health outcomes, mostly probable PTSD and depression. No S/Ps met criteria for all three mental health outcomes. There was a significantly higher prevalence of more than one comorbidity among S/Ps compared to similar women from the English general population (Pearson X^2=4.10, df (2), p<0.05) (Table 33, Appendix 2).

Table 21: S/P mental health comorbidities compared to women in the general English population (col %)

Mental health comorbidities [a]	**S/Ps % (n) N=405**	**APMS % (n) N=1595**
Criteria for 0 mental health outcomes	76.3 (309)	81.5 (1256)
Criteria for 1 mental health outcome		
Alcohol misuse only	13.2 (49)	12.1 (206)
Probable PTSD only	2.8 (6)	2.3 (39)
Probable depression only	2.3 (10)	1.7 (29)
Criteria for 2 mental health outcomes		
Probable PTSD and depression	3.2 (12)	0.7 (14)
Probable PTSD and alcohol misuse	0.5 (2)	0.9 (14)
Probable depression and alcohol misuse	1.7 (6)	0.6 (13)
Criteria for 3 mental health outcomes		
Probable PTSD, depression and alcohol misuse	0 (0)	0.2 (4)

Missing n=11-24 [a] Based on meeting criteria for probable moderate or severe depression (PHQ-9/CIS-R), probable PTSD (PCL-C/TSQ) or alcohol misuse (AUDIT)

Summary

This chapter examined alcohol misuse among spouses and partners (S/Ps).

- The prevalence of alcohol misuse was comparable between S/Ps and women in the general population in support of my hypotheses.
- S/Ps were significantly more likely to meet criteria for hazardous alcohol consumption and binge-drinking than similar women in the general population.
- S/P alcohol misuse was significantly higher among S/Ps living in rural areas compared to those living in urban areas and higher hazardous alcohol use was significantly higher among S/Ps employed outside the home compared to those who were not.

- Hazardous alcohol consumption was significantly higher among S/Ps of Service personnel of NCO/other rank compared to the S/Ps of Service personnel of officer rank.
- Service personnel separation from the family was associated with S/P alcohol misuse based on AUDIT scores and approaching significance with hazardous alcohol consumption.
- The number of mental health comorbidities was significantly higher for S/Ps than similar women in the general population.

Chapter 9 – Marital satisfaction among spouses/partners

This chapter examines marital satisfaction among spouses and partners (S/Ps) (objective 3).

Objectives and hypotheses

The objectives of this chapter were to:

- estimate the prevalence of marital satisfaction among S/Ps
- compare the prevalence to similar women in the UK general population
- identify associations between S/P marital satisfaction and S/P socio-demographics, Service personnel military characteristics and Service personnel mental health

As there were few estimates of the prevalence of marital satisfaction among S/Ps (Chapter 2, p47), it was not possible to form hypotheses regarding the prevalence of marital distress among S/Ps or how this might differ from women in the general population based on the current evidence. Instead, I aimed to provide further evidence in this area by determining the prevalence of marital satisfaction among UK S/Ps. In addition, I investigated how the marital satisfaction of S/Ps was related to the mental health of couple members, as well as S/P socio-demographics and Service personnel military characteristics. As per the previous literature in this area (Chapter 2, p47), I hypothesised marital satisfaction among S/Ps would be influenced by:

- S/P probable depression
- Service personnel marital satisfaction, probable depression and probable PTSD

Further details on the data, variables and analytical procedures used in the analyses can be found in Chapter 4 (p152-181).

Results

Prevalence of marital satisfaction among S/Ps compared to women in the general UK population

Nearly a third of spouses and partners (S/Ps) (30.8% (N=111)) met DAS-7 scores for marital distress (score <21) (Table 34, Appendix 2). Self-reported relationship happiness (DAS-7 item 7) among S/Ps differed significantly from comparable women in the general UK population. After adjusting for variables known to be associated with relationship satisfaction in general population studies, S/Ps were significantly more likely to endorse being “unhappy” in their relationship than comparable women from the general population (Table 22).

Table 22: Prevalence of relationship happiness among S/Ps compared to women in the general UK population (col %, X^2, OR, 95% CI)

Relationship happiness	S/Ps % (n) (N=405)	MCS4[a] % (n) (N=13193)	X^2	df	Unadj. OR [b] (95% CI)	Adj. OR [c] (95% CI)
Happy	58.5 (223)	83.9 (8414)			1.0	1.0
Neither happy or unhappy	23.3 (86)	7.0 (668)			4.77 (3.62-6.29)	4.69 (3.26-6.74)
Unhappy	18.2 (67)	9.2 (847)	72.00***	2	2.85 (2.05-3.98)	2.29 (1.55-3.37)

Missing=29-3264 ‡p<0.10 *p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

[a] Millennium Cohort Study Fourth Study, University of London (2008) [b] Very happy baseline [c] Adjusted for age (years), employment (yes/no), number of children (discrete)

S/P marital satisfaction and associations with S/P socio-demographics and Service personnel military characteristics

After adjusting for S/P socio-demographic variables significant in univariable analyses, S/Ps with 2 or more children were significantly less likely to meet criteria for marital distress than those with one child (adj. OR 0.57 (95% CI 0.35-0.92)) while S/Ps aged 45-55 years were more likely to meet marital distress criteria compared to the youngest age group (adj. OR 2.32 (95% CI 1.13-4.81)) (Table 23).

After adjusting for S/P age and Service personnel military characteristics significant in univariable analyses, S/Ps who were affiliated with Service personnel holding NCO or other ranks were significantly more likely to meet criteria for marital distress than S/Ps of Service personnel holding officer rank (adj. OR 2.11 (95% CI 1.13-3.96)) (Table 24). Service personnel engagement type, serving status, experience of combat role and experience of deployment were significant at p<0.10 in Pearson's chi-squared tests but not in multivariable regression models after controlling for other significant variables.

Table 23: Associations between S/P marital distress and S/P socio-demographics (row %, X^2, OR, 95% CI)

Socio-demographic variables	Marital distress caseness (DAS-7 scores <21) row % (N)		X^2	df	Unadj. OR (95% CI) [a]	Adj. OR (95% CI) [b]
Age (years)	**No marital distress 69.2% (N=265)**	**Marital distress 30.8% (N=111)**				
25-34	74.9 (72)	25.1 (23)			1.0	1.0
35-44	71.6 (139)	28.4 (56)			1.18 (0.65-2.15)	1.17 (0.64-2.14)
45-55	55.3 (52)	44.7 (32)	3.59*	2	2.42 (1.15-5.07)	2.33 (1.13-4.81)
Employed outside the home						
No	74.4 (83)	25.6 (28)			-	-
Yes	67.1 (182)	32.9 (83)	1.71	1	-	-
Occupational social class						
Managerial & Professional/Intermediate	63.7 (123)	36.3 (63)			-	-
Routine & manual	75.0 (46)	25.0 (15)			-	-
Not employed	73.8 (78)	26.2 (27)	2.01	2	-	-
Residence						
In town, village away from base	66.6 (173)	33.4 (83)			-	-
Military housing/town near base	75.8 (78)	24.2 (23)	2.47	1	-	-
Urban/rural residence						
Major/minor urban, city/town	63.5 (119)	36.5 (58)			-	-
Rural town/village, dispersed	71.3 (65)	28.8 (28)	1.42	1	-	-

Number of children						
1	62.9 (117)	37.1 (61)			1.0	1.0
2 or more	75.3 (148)	24.7 (50)	5.67*	1	0.56 (0.34-0.90)	0.57 (0.35-0.92)
Age of youngest child (years)						
3-10	71.5 (191)	28.5 (71)			-	-
11-18	63.5 (74)	36.5 (40)	1.99	1	-	-
Relationship status						
Married	70.5 (239)	29.5 (98)			-	-
Cohabiting/ new relationship/not living together	60.8 (26)	39.3 (13)	0.89	1	-	-

Missing =11-115 ‡p<0.10 *p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

[a] Baseline categories S/P age 25-34 (years), not employed outside the home, managerial & professional occupational social class, residing in town, village away from base, residing in major/minor urban/city/town, having 1 child, youngest child aged 3-10 years, married

[b] Adjusted for S/P age & S/P number of children

Table 24: Associations between S/P marital distress and Service personnel military characteristics (row %, X^2, OR, 95% CI)

Service personnel military characteristics	Marital distress caseness (DAS-7 scores <21) row % (N)		X^2	df	Unadj. OR (95% CI) [a]	Adj. OR (95% CI) [b]
Service	**No marital distress 69.2% (N=265)**	**Marital distress 30.8% (N=111)**				
Army	72.2 (172)	27.8 (65)			-	-
RAF/RM/RN	64.0 (93)	36.1 (46)	2.07	1	-	-
Rank						
Officers	77.6 (75)	22.4 (22)			1.0	1.0
NCOs/other ranks	67.1 (190)	32.9 (89)	3.55‡	1	1.70 (0.97-2.96)	2.11 (1.13-3.96)
Engagement type						
Regular	71. (233)	28.3 (87)			1.0	1.0
Reserve	54.9 (32)	45.2 (23)	5.51*	1	2.09 (1.12-3.91)	1.93 (0.99-3.77)
Serving status						
Still serving	72.8 (175)	27.2 (65)			1.0	1.0
No longer in Service	62.8 (90)	37.2 (46)	3.08‡	1	1.59 (0.94-2.67)	1.27 (0.74-2.16)
Length of service						
0-9 years	67.5 (36)	32.5 (17)			-	-
10-22 years	70.7 (144)	29.3 (54)			-	-
>22years	68.1 (83)	31.9 (39)	0.15	1	-	-
Experience of combat role						
No experience	67.0 (209)	33.0 (95)			1.0	1.0

Experience of combat role	78.6 (56)	21.5 (16)	3.46‡	1	0.55 (0.29-1.04)	0.61 (0.32-1.15)
Experience of deployment						
No experience	63.5 (105)	36.5 (52)			1.0	1.0
Experience of deployment	72.8 (160)	27.2 (59)	2.80‡	1	0.65 (0.39-1.08)	0.94 (0.56-1.59)
Experience of family separation						
No experience	66.4 (155)	33.6 (77)			-	-
≥2 months	73.4 (106)	26.6 (32)	1.34	1	-	-

Missing =1-6 ‡p<0.10 *p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

[a] Baseline categories S/P 25-34 years of age, Army, officer rank, regular engagement type, still serving, 10-22 years of Service, no experience of combat, no experience of deployment, no experience of family separation in last 2 years

[b] Adjusted for Service personnel rank, Service personnel engagement type, personnel ex-Service status, Service personnel experience of combat role, Service personnel experience of deployment role & S/P age

S/P marital satisfaction and associations with Service personnel marital satisfaction and S/P and Service personnel mental health

S/P marital distress was significantly associated with that of Service personnel in military couples ($p<0.001$) (Table 25). Nearly two-thirds of military couples had both members meeting DAS-7 criteria for marital distress and a higher proportion of S/Ps were discordant for marital distress.

Table 25: Associations between S/P and Service personnel marital distress (col %, X^2)

	S/P marital distress % (N)		**X^2**	**df**
Service personnel marital distress	**No marital distress**	**Marital distress**		
No marital distress	78.2 (190)	41.1 (41)		
Marital distress	21.8 (53)	58.9 (60)	43.22***	1

Based on 344 couples ‡p<0.10 *p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

Correlations of mental health scores of S/Ps and Service personnel

The marital satisfaction, alcohol misuse, depression and PTSD measure scores of S/Ps and Service personnel were significantly positively correlated (Figure 14). S/P marital satisfaction was significantly negatively correlated with S/P and Service personnel depression (PHQ-9) and PTSD (PCL-C) measure scores but there was no significant correlation with S/P alcohol measure scores (AUDIT).

Figure 14: Correlation matrix of S/P and Service personnel mental health measure scores

	MP DAS-7	S/P DAS-7	MP AUDIT	S/P AUDIT	MP PHQ-9	S/P PHQ-9	MP PCL-C	S/P PCL-C
MP DAS-7	-							
S/P DAS-7	**0.47**	-						
MP AUDIT	**-0.12**	-0.02	-					
S/P AUDIT	-0.03	-0.10	**0.18**	-				
MP PHQ-9	**-0.26**	**-0.16**	**0.18**	-0.06	-			
S/P PHQ-9	**-0.16**	**-0.29**	0.04	**0.15**	**0.14**	-		
MP PCL-C	**-0.22**	**-0.12**	**0.24**	-0.04	**0.79**	**0.12**	-	
S/P PCL-C	**-0.19**	**-0.36**	-0.02	**0.15**	**0.22**	**0.72**	**0.18**	-

Based on 344 married or cohabiting couples. Bold indicates significance at $p<0.05$ MP = Service personnel, S/P = spouses/partners

Dyadic analyses of S/P marital satisfaction

Results from the *a priori* model are presented followed by results from the altered model. Further details of the data and analytical procedures can be found in Chapter 4 (p172).

Measurement models of marital satisfaction

Confirmatory factor analyses for the *a priori* model indicated both S/Ps and Service personnel DAS-07 items loaded satisfactorily onto latent marital variables, with factor loadings all above 0.630 (Table 26). The RMSEA for each CFA indicated a poor fit to the data, while CFIs and TLIs indicated a model approaching an acceptable fit. The results of the CFIs and TLIs, combined with the size of the factor loadings, suggest these measurement models were suitable for inclusion in the SEM.

Table 26: Confirmatory Factor Analysis factor loadings and fit statistics for S/P and Service personnel latent marital satisfaction variables (N=344)

CFA model results	***A priori* model**		**Altered model**	
	S/P	**Service personnel**	**S/P**	**Service personnel**
Factor loadings (S.E)[a]				
DAS-01	0.691 (0.032)	0.630 (0.040)	0.555 (0.040)	0.529 (0.043)
(DAS-01-DAS-02)	-	-	0.544 (0.042)	0.406 (0.038)
DAS-02	0.740 (0.030)	0.764 (0.030)	0.621 (0.038)	0.685 (0.034)
DAS-03	0.636 (0.033)	0.637 (0.033)	0.659 (0.034)	0.652 (0.034)
DAS-04	0.743 (0.027)	0.636 (0.038)	0.765 (0.027)	0.652 (0.039)
DAS-05	0.750 (0.025)	0.725 (0.030)	0.772 (0.025)	0.745 (0.030)
DAS-06	0.688 (0.028)	0.685 (0.033)	0.711 (0.028)	0.698 (0.033)
DAS-07	0.686 (0.033)	0.665 (0.036)	0.701 (0.033)	0.682 (0.038)
Model fit statistics				
RMSEA (90% CI)	0.202 (0.178-0.226)	0.217 (0.193-0.241)	0.144 (0.119-0.170)	0.195 (0.170-0.220)
CFI	0.902	0.875	0.954	0.906
TLI	0.853	0.812	0.926	0.848

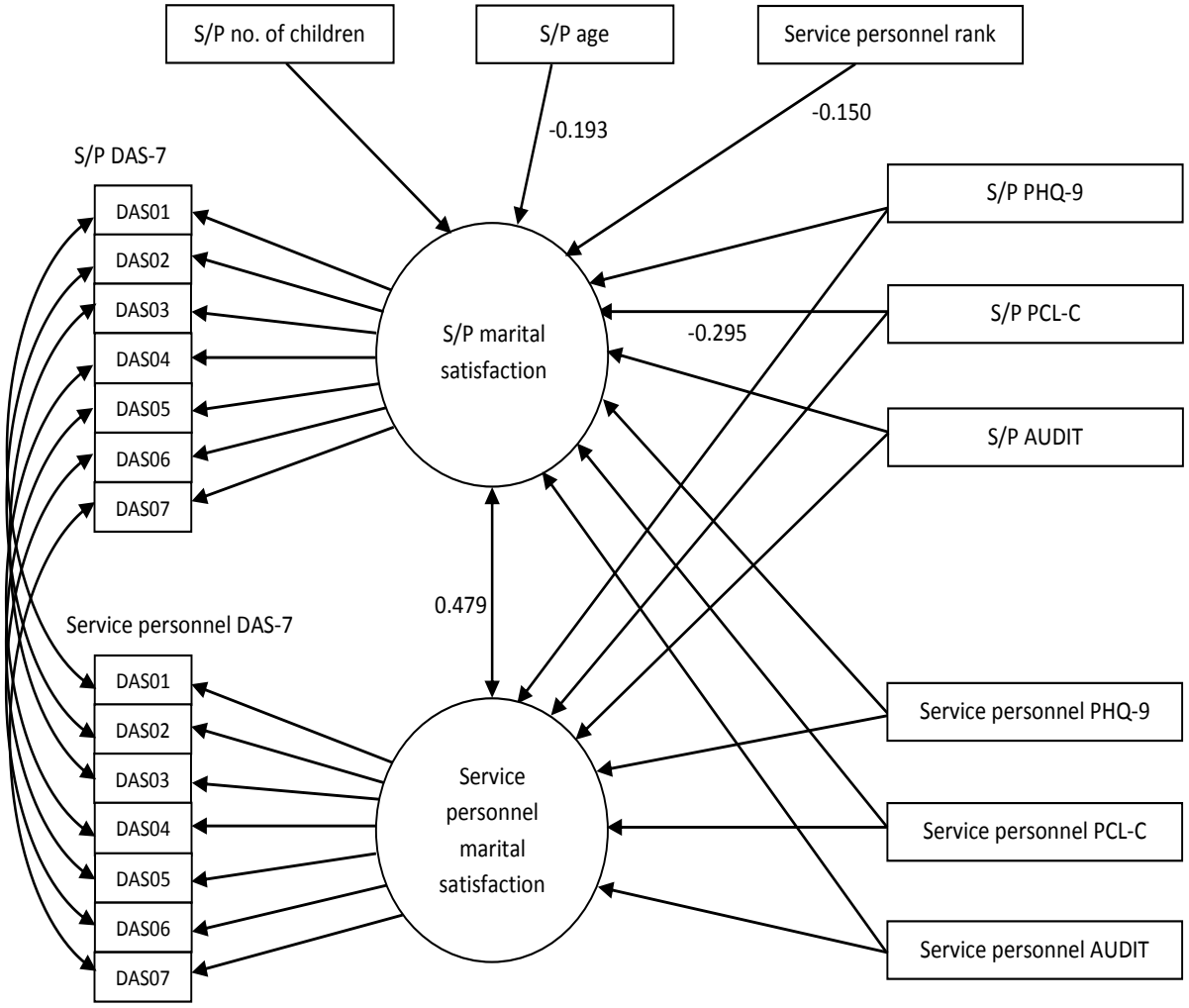
Based on data from 344 couples. [a] Standardised beta coefficient (STDYX)

Structural models

Parameter estimates of associations between variables significant at $p<0.05$ from the *a priori* structural model examining S/P marital satisfaction are shown in Figure 15 and reported in

Table 27. This model was over-identified, with 276 data points and 113 free parameters and displayed a close fit to the data (RMSEA=0.071 (90% CI 0.063-0.078) p<0.001, CFI=0.906, TLI=0.887).

Figure 15: Results of *a priori* structural equation model of S/P marital satisfaction (N=342)



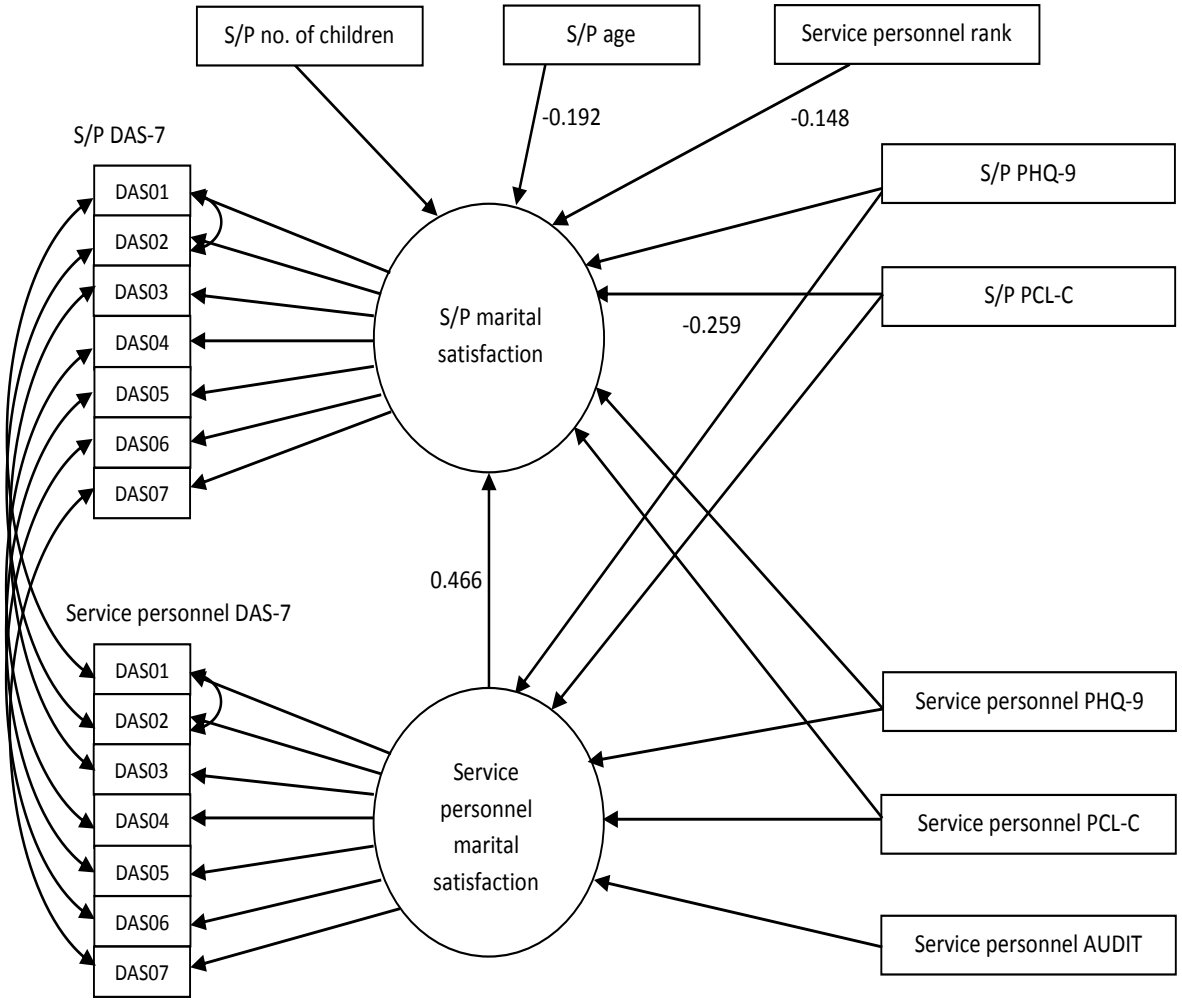
Values indicate standardized coefficients significant at p<0.05. All DAS-07 covariances significant at p<0.001. RMSEA=0.071 (90% CI 0.063-0.078) p<0.001, CFI=0.906, TLI=0.887, N=342.

Model alteration and modifications

As the RMSEA or CFI/TLI indices indicated a close fit to the data, attempts were made to improve model fit by revisiting the *a priori* model. Changes to the model included the removal of S/P alcohol from the model as S/P AUDIT scores were not significantly correlated with S/P or Service personnel marital satisfaction. Service personnel AUDIT scores were retained as they were correlated with Service personnel marital satisfaction scores. The modification indices option in Mplus was consulted to identify possible improvements to the original model.

Suggested changes included covarying DAS-01 ("Philosophy of life") and DAS-02 ("Aims, goals, and things believed important") for both S/Ps and Service personnel would reduce the chi-squared by 70.02 and 35.96 respectively. These questions were considered to be similar in nature and both modifications were included in the second model. A regression of Service personnel marital satisfaction onto S/P marital satisfaction was included rather than a bivariate correlation as S/P marital satisfaction was the primary outcome of interest in this analysis (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Results of altered structural equation model of S/P marital satisfaction (N=342)



Values indicate standardized coefficients significant at p<0.05. All DAS-07 covariances significant at p<0.001. RMSEA =0.057 (90% CI 0.049-0.066) p=0.073, CFI=0.941, TLI=0.929, N=342.

Following alterations to the *a priori* model, the confirmatory factor analyses were revisited to check that factor loading and fit indices were acceptable. Factor loadings for individual DAS-07 questions onto the latent marital variable for S/Ps and Service personnel were acceptable with

the six out of seven items loading at above 0.6 (Table 36, Appendix 2) – the exceptions were the covaried DAS-01 and DAS-02 items for S/Ps and Service personnel respectively. The CFI and TLI findings for this measurement model indicated improved fit over the previous CFA for both S/Ps and Service personnel, and when combined with factor loadings, were deemed suitable for inclusion in the altered SEM. The altered model displayed improved goodness of fit to the data compared to the *a priori* model (RMSEA =0.057 (90% CI 0.049-0.066) p=0.073, CFI=0.941, TLI=0.929) (Figure 16, Table 27). This model was over-identified, with 253 data points and 113 free parameters.

S/P age (years) (std. β=-0.192, p<0.001), S/P PCL-C scores (std. β=-0.259, p<0.001), Service personnel marital satisfaction (std.β=0.466, p<0.001) and rank (std.β=-0.148, p=0.008) were all significantly associated with S/P marital satisfaction (Figure 16, Table 27). There were no significant associations between S/P PHQ-9 scores, number of children or Service personnel PHQ-9, PCL-C or AUDIT scores and S/P marital satisfaction (all p>0.10).

Table 27: Parameter estimates for *a priori* and altered structural equation models

Parameter estimates	***A priori* model** [b]		**Altered model** [c]	
S/P estimates	**Std. parameter estimates (β)**[a]	**p value**	**Std. parameter estimates (β)**[a]	**p value**
S/P DAS-7 factor loadings				
DAS-01	0.677	<0.001	0.562	<0.001
DAS-02	0.722	<0.001	0.621	<0.001
Correlation DAS01-DAS-02	-	-	*0.517*	*<0.001*
DAS-03	0.654	<0.001	0.667	<0.001
DAS-04	0.768	<0.001	0.787	<0.001
DAS-05	0.767	<0.001	0.777	<0.001
DAS-06	0.687	<0.001	0.703	<0.001
DAS-07	0.708	<0.001	0.722	<0.001
Socio-demographic, military factors				
S/P age	-0.193	<0.001	-0.192	<0.001
Service personnel rank	-0.150	0.006	-0.148	0.008
S/P no. of children	-0.037	0.487	-0.035	0.522
S/P mental health				
S/P depression (PHQ-9)	-0.091	0.215	-0.054	0.399
S/P PTSD (PCL-C)	-0.295	<0.001	-0.259	<0.001

S/P alcohol use (AUDIT)	-0.035	0.513	-	-
Service personnel mental health				
Service personnel depression (PHQ-9)	-0.109	0.190	-0.010	0.900
Service personnel PTSD (PCL-C)	0.014	0.881	0.005	0.952
Service personnel alcohol use (AUDIT)	-0.006	0.910	-	-
Service personnel marital satisfaction	0.479	<0.001	0.466	<0.001
Service personnel estimates				
Service personnel DAS-7 factor loadings				
DAS-01	0.612	<0.001	0.526	<0.001
DAS-02	0.728	<0.001	0.650	<0.001
Correlation DAS01-DAS-02	-	-	*0.391*	*<0.001*
DAS-03	0.616	<0.001	0.621	<0.001
DAS-04	0.634	<0.001	0.650	<0.001
DAS-05	0.728	<0.001	0.743	<0.001
DAS-06	0.691	<0.001	0.703	<0.001
DAS-07	0.711	<0.001	0.724	<0.001
S/P mental health				
S/P depression (PHQ-9)	-0.080	0.373	-0.081	0.371
S/P PTSD (PCL-C)	-0.100	0.239	-0.100	0.240
S/P alcohol use (AUDIT)	0.009	0.885	-	-
Service personnel mental health				
Service personnel depression (PHQ-9)	-0.197	0.049	-0.201	0.044
Service personnel PTSD (PCL-C)	0.011	0.915	0.016	0.879
Service personnel alcohol use (AUDIT)	-0.093	0.159	-0.077	0.245
Model fit statistics				
RMSEA (90% CI)	0.071 (0.063-0.078)	p<0.001	0.057 (0.049-0.066)	p=0.073
CFI	0.906	-	0.941	-
TLI	0.887	-	0.929	-

[a] Standardised B coefficient (STDYX)

Summary

This chapter examined marital satisfaction among spouses and partners (S/Ps).

- Nearly a third of S/Ps met DAS-7 criteria for marital distress and they were significantly more likely to endorse being unhappy in their current relationship than comparable women in the general UK population.
- S/P age was significantly associated with marital distress in multivariable analyses, with distress increasing with increasing age.
- Marital distress was significantly higher among S/Ps of non-officer ranked personnel.
- An increasing number of children appeared to act as a protector against marital distress in multivariable analyses, although this was accounted for by other factors in the SEM.
- Associations between S/P marital distress and Service personnel experiences of deployment, combat or family separation were not significant.
- Further explorations using structural equation modelling found the largest association with Service personnel marital satisfaction. S/P PTSD measure scores, S/P age and Service personnel rank were all significantly associated with S/P marital satisfaction. These findings partially support my hypotheses.

Chapter 10 – Quantitative summary

- The mental health and well-being of S/Ps was poorer compared to women in the general population, with an increased prevalence of probable depression, hazardous alcohol consumption and mental health comorbidities and a lower prevalence of relationship happiness.
- While employment among S/Ps was similar to women in general population, spouses and partners were more likely to work in intermediate occupational social classes but less likely to work in routine and manual jobs.
- Employment outcomes for S/Ps improved once personnel left Service.
- Associations with S/P socio-demographics or Service personnel military characteristics suggest wider institutional factors such as Service, rank, location and family separation were associated with the mental health and well-being of S/Ps.
    - S/Ps of Army and regular Service personnel had poorer employment outcomes than other groups
    - S/Ps who reported living near to or on military bases were significantly more likely to not be working outside the home than those living away from bases
    - S/P alcohol misuse was significantly higher among S/Ps living in rural areas compared to those living in urban areas and higher hazardous alcohol use was significantly higher among S/Ps employed outside the home compared to those who were not.
    - Service personnel separation from the family was associated with S/P alcohol misuse based on AUDIT scores and approaching significance with hazardous alcohol consumption.
- Service personnel probable depression was associated with S/P probable PTSD but probable depression and alcohol misuse were not associated between military couple members.
- S/P marital satisfaction was associated with S/P PTSD scores and age and Service personnel rank and marital satisfaction.

Chapter 11 – Qualitative methodology

This chapter details the procedure for the qualitative study within this thesis and outlines the definition and measurement of well-being within this particular component, participant recruitment, data collection and the method of data analysis. An *accompanied posting* is the terminology used for military relocation in this study.

Sampling and recruitment

Participant selection

Purposive sampling was used to select participants from the sample of S/Ps who had taken part in the Children of Military Fathers' study and who consented to follow-up. I aimed to recruited between 20-25 participants as recommended by Braun and Clarke for qualitative studies that are part of a larger piece of work such as a thesis (Braun and Clarke 2013).

Selection was dependent on S/Ps having experienced an accompanied posting at least once in the 5 years prior to interview, Service personnel rank and Service personnel serving status. Due to differences between the expectations on S/Ps of officers and non-officers in performing roles in the US military community as a result of their husband's rank (Enloe 2000, Harrell 2001), I aimed to explore whether these same issues were present for UK S/Ps and how well-being may differ according to Service personnel rank as a result. Attempts were made to recruit a balanced number of participants affiliated with officer and non-officer ranks. Initially, S/Ps of ex-Service personnel were excluded. Inclusion criteria were broadened to include S/Ps of former Service personnel which allowed exploration of S/P experiences of transition and how these were perceived to influence well-being.

Recruitment

Telephone and email details were used to contact mothers who had consented to follow-up during the Children of Military Fathers' study (97% did so (393 out of 405)). A two-stage sampling method was used to identify and recruit potential participants, with an initial on-line survey followed by a telephone call or email. The qualitative data was collected from January to July 2015 following the completion of the systematic reviews and quantitative analyses.

Due to the length of time between the original study and recruitment for this qualitative study, a short on-line pre-interview questionnaire was sent to S/Ps to identify participants who met the inclusion criteria (Appendix 3.1). Initial contact was made according to their preferred

method of contact, with follow-up attempts made using alternative methods (if additional information had been provided).

The short eligibility questionnaire collected information on:

- relationship status (whether the S/P was in a relationship with current or former Service personnel and the length of relationship)
- S/P employment status
- Service personnel rank and length of Service
- number of accompanied postings S/Ps had experienced
- whether S/Ps had experienced an accompanied postings in last 5 years
- S/P interest in finding out more about, or taking part in, the study

Respondents who met inclusion criteria and expressed an interest in finding out more about the study or taking part were sent a study pack containing an invitation letter, information sheet, consent form and sign-posting booklet, either by email or post according to their preference (Appendix 3.2). All were written in easily readable, lay language. The invitation letter described the aims of the study and what would be required of participants while the information sheet provided further details and contact information for the researcher for participants who wanted either further clarification or to take part. The sign-posting booklet provided information and contact details for support services for current and former Armed Forces families with regards to employment, mental health, relationships, finances and education. A stamped self-addressed return envelope was included so participants could return the consent form. Respondents were re-contacted after one week to confirm participation or refusal.

Recruitment phases

Three waves of recruitment were required to reach the 20-25 interviews aimed for in order to proceed with data analysis (Figure 17). Initially, I intended to focus on S/Ps of Army personnel as this is the most mobile Service with the lowest prevalence of S/P employment among the three Service branches (Defence Statistics 2013a), a key area for this thesis. At this stage, participants were invited to take part if they were S/Ps of a currently serving member of the British Army who had experienced an accompanied posting in the last five years. S/Ps of ex-Service personnel were excluded. Participants were also ineligible if they were no longer in a relationship with a current member of the UK Army as there may have been potential biases in their responses about the effects of military accompanied postings on their relationship with their husband or the military institution.

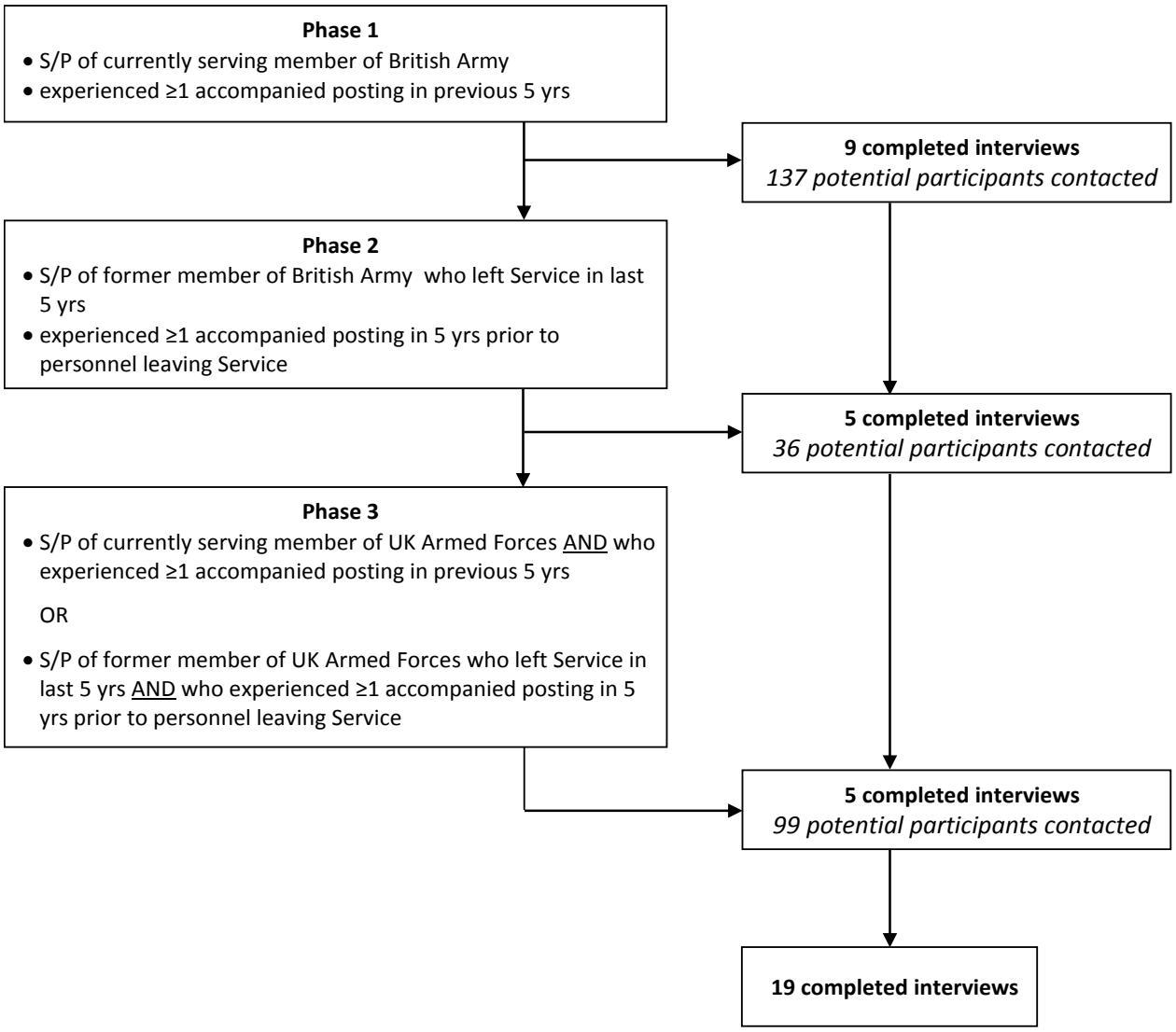
Due to high mobility among participants of the Children's of Military Father study, contact details provided at the time of survey were no longer up to date for many potential respondents. Of the attempts to contact the 137 S/Ps potentially eligible for this phase, 50 were not able to be contacted, 36 had left Service, 16 were no longer in a relationship with Service personnel, 13 had not experienced an accompanied posting within the given time period and 12 were not interested. The first phase resulted in nine completed interviews – six with S/Ps of officers and three with S/Ps of NCOs.

Given the low number of participants at this stage, another phase of recruitment was conducted after seeking and obtaining ethical approval. In this second phase of recruitment (Figure 17), the inclusion criteria were expanded to include S/Ps of Army personnel who had left Service in order to capture the experiences of S/Ps of personnel who had recently transitioned out of the military. Participants were eligible to take part if they were in a relationship with a former member of the British Army who had left Service within the last five years and if they had experienced at least one accompanied posting in the five years prior to personnel leaving. S/Ps were excluded if it had been more than five years since Service personnel had left the Army and if their last accompanied posting was more than five years prior to leaving Service in order to limit recall bias regarding their experiences of accompanied postings and transition. All participants were had experienced transition out of Service had their last posting in the eight years prior to interview.

Respondents in the previous phase were re-contacted if they had stated that personnel had left Service. Thirty-six women were approached and five interviews were completed, increasing the number of total interviews to 14.

As data saturation had not occurred, ethical approval was obtained for a third recruitment phase. While the inclusion criteria were expanded to include S/Ps of all Service branches of the UK Armed Forces (Royal Navy, Royal Marine, Army or Royal Air Force) (Figure 17), recruitment focused on S/Ps of Royal Air Force (RAF) personnel in the first instance as they are the second most mobile Service following the Army (Defence Statistics 2013a).

Figure 17: Flow diagram of qualitative study recruitment phases



Of the attempts to contact the 99 S/Ps potentially eligible for this phase, 73 were not able to be contacted, 12 were not eligible, 7 were not interested and 2 were no longer in a relationship with the Service person. This phase resulted in five completed interviews – three with S/Ps of officers and two with S/Ps of NCOs.

The final inclusion criteria for this qualitative study were therefore:

- S/P of currently serving member of UK Armed Forces who had experienced at least one accompanied posting in the last 5 years OR
- S/P of former serving member of UK Armed Forces who had left Service in the last 5 years who had experienced at least one accompanied posting in the 5 years prior to personnel leaving Service

By widening the inclusion criteria, I was able to complete 19 interviews, close to the proposed number in the initial phase of recruitment. I did not seek to increase the number of interviews as data saturation had been reached.

Data collection

Measurement of well-being

Qualitative interviews have been used in a range of disciplines to study well-being, including that of spouses and partners of Service personnel (Beyene, Becker et al. 2002, Whittaker, Hardy et al. 2005, Irwin, Milsom et al. 2006, Jervis 2011). These tend to be conducted as a way of looking at well-being and the factors that influence it in greater depth than standardised questionnaires will allow. Interviews, in particular narrative accounts, might be seen as a means of widening the scope of measurement of eudemonic well-being to include how people make meaning of their lives (Bauer, McAdams et al. 2008).

In the qualitative study, I intended to explore the well-being of spouses and partners or Service personnel, by highlighting situations and circumstances under which S/Ps experience negative or positive influences such as stress and emotional pressure that may contribute to poor well-being, and in accordance with the two continuum model of health and well-being theory (Westerhof and Keyes 2010) (Chapter 3, p146), poor mental health. In order to elucidate these experiences, and link them to S/P well-being, the interview schedule was informed by the domains of well-being outlined in the definition used within this thesis – potential, employment, social connections and community (Chapter 3, p147). These domains are known to be affected by accompanied postings; employment, social networks, finances and family relationships (Drummet, Coleman et al. 2003, Cooke and Speirs 2005, Burrell, Adams et al. 2006a, Ministry of Defence 2011, Runge, Waller et al. 2014, Blakely, Hennessy et al. 2014b) and align with layers of influence within the Dahlgren and Whitehead model of health (Dahlgren and Whitehead 2007). Diversity in S/P well-being was explored according to self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci 2000a).

Interview schedule

A semi-structured interview schedule was constructed from the domains of well-being outlined in the definition used in this thesis, the empirical results of the quantitative study and the literature. The schedule covered S/P experiences of four topic areas; employment, family relations and social networks during accompanied postings and their relationship with the military institution. Participant perceptions of how these experiences had influenced their

well-being were determined by asking S/Ps to reflect on their emotional or psychological responses to their experiences at the time.

Drawing on the definition of well-being used in this thesis, questions were focused on S/P employment, social connections, including family and friends and their relationship with the military community and institution. In keeping with the mixed methods approach, the interview schedule was intended to further explore the employment and marital satisfaction findings of the quantitative study within the context of accompanied postings. Questions on the employment experiences of S/Ps were used to further expand on the quantitative findings of employment and occupational social class (Chapter 6) and to explore the experiences of S/Ps in finding and maintaining employment or careers. Given the high prevalence of marital distress among S/Ps (Chapter 9, p218), questions were included on how accompanied postings might influence their relationship with their husband or partner to explore this issue using a different methodology.

Additional questions were included to explore factors highlighted in prior research as being influenced by accompanied postings and therefore relevant to S/P well-being. Questions exploring the relationship between S/Ps and the military were included due to the association between S/P well-being and satisfaction with military life (Harrison and Laliberte 1994, Burrell, Adams et al. 2006a) and to explore incorporation among UK S/Ps (Finch 1983, Enloe 2000, Jervis 2011). Although no quantitative data was collected on social networks in the Children of Military Fathers' study, I chose to explore this area due to the protective effect of social support on S/P well-being and mental health (Rosen and Moghadam 1988, Klein, Tatone et al. 1989, Sudom 2010, Fields, Nichols et al. 2012).

Feedback on the interview schedule was provided by a representative of the Army Families Federation (AFF)[8] before interviews commenced. Comments included ensuring the use of UK-specific terminology, S/Ps use of social media in relation to their social networks, the impact of accompanied postings on family finances, and additional family needs (i.e. children with special educational need or disabilities). Following discussion and revisiting the literature, questions on these areas and the perceived influences on S/P well-being were included in the schedule.

[8] The AFF is a Service charity that provides support, information and advocacy on behalf of Army families and aims to influence policy related to the military community. See www.aff.org.uk for more information. AFF part funded this thesis.

The interview schedule was piloted with two members of the KCMHR research team in order to review the clarity, content and order of the questions. Three further pilot interviews were conducted with participants to determine question comprehension and the length of interview among S/Ps. No major changes were made to the interview schedule as a result of these pilot interviews, and they were included in the data analysis. Both sets of pilot interviews allowed me to become more familiar with the interview schedule as well as gaining confidence in asking and framing questions in ways that were appropriate for, and familiar to, S/Ps.

The interview schedule (Appendix 3.2.4) began with introductory questions to gauge how participants viewed accompanied postings overall, before proceeding to their experiences of employment, family relationships (with husband, children and wider family), social relationships with friends and other S/Ps and support and expectations from the military institution. Within each of these four sections, participants were probed on how they perceived these experiences to have influenced their well-being. S/Ps of Service personnel who had left Service were asked additional questions relating to their experiences of employment, family relationships and social networks and military support during transition and how they perceived these to have influenced their well-being.

Telephone interviews

Individual semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted and audio recorded. This method was chosen as the sample was comprised of women with families, some of who were employed and geographically dispersed, including overseas. Because of these factors, it was envisaged that telephone interviews would be more convenient for participants than face-to-face interviews and logistically easier to arrange.

Some researchers have expressed concern about the quality of data obtained from interviews conducted by telephone. The lack of contact between researcher and participant, shorter duration, lack of visual cues and increased concentration have been suggested to affect the depth of data obtained from interviews (Irvine 2011). While some differences in the conduct of the interview are apparent (Irvine, Drew et al. 2012), research into the validity of data obtained from telephone interviews has shown they produce similar findings and transcript complexity to face-to-face interviews (Brustad, Skeie et al. 2003, Sturges and Hanrahan 2004, Palermo, Hughes et al. 2010). In addition, the social and physical distance from the interviewer means participants can find it easier to honestly discuss potentially sensitive issues such as difficult events, relationships and financial issues using this method (Greenfield, Midanik et al. 2000, Mealer and Jones 2014).

While there can be benefits of the use of telephone over face-to-face interviews, a number of steps were taken to maximise the quality of the data collected. Building rapport with participants is extremely important in order to encourage a relationship between the researcher and participants and is an essential part of the interview process (Dicicco-Bloom. B. and Crabtree 2006). This began at the first stages of recruitment by having friendly, informal conversations with participants while confirming eligibility or arranging interview times and continued throughout the process. To ensure that the majority of speaking during the interview was done by participants, I limited my dialogue to the introductory preamble and obtaining verbal consent, questions from the topic guide and pre-determined probes and short summaries confirming interpretation. Non-verbal communication and pauses were used in place of visual cues to encourage participants to talk and provide further explanation or clarification. Interviews were kept to 75 minutes or less in order to prevent interviewer or participant fatigue.

Interview procedure

Each interview started with a brief introduction of the study aims and a reiteration of the voluntary and confidential nature of involvement. Participants were then invited to ask any questions before I began the interview questions. Consent was obtained again verbally at this stage and recorded. As a reimbursement for their time, participants were sent a cheque for £20. During interviews, a data collection sheet was used to double-check eligibility according to the on-line survey information and acted as a prompt for important participant details such as names, dates and places during the interview (Appendix 3.2.7).

Transcription and use of quotes

Interviews were audio recorded with participant consent and transcribed verbatim by a professional transcriber who signed a confidentiality agreement. I did not transcribe any of the interviews. However, I checked all interviews for accuracy on their return from the transcriber which provided an opportunity to gain insight into, and familiarity with, the data from the interviews prior to analysis. Transcripts were anonymised before analysis. All names were replaced by pseudonyms.

Quotations were used with participant consent and were largely verbatim. Any potentially identifying information was removed. Fillers and non-verbal elements such as laughter or sighs were removed to improve readability.

Ethical considerations

Ethical approval for the Children with Military Fathers study was granted by the Ministry of Defence Research Ethics Committee (654/MODREC/15) and the King's College Hospital Research Ethics Committee (NHS REC reference: 08/H0808/27) (Appendix 3.2.8). A substantial amendment to include the qualitative component of the thesis was submitted to the King's College Ethics Research Committee and approved in July 2014 (AM08). Substantial amendments to widen the inclusion criteria were submitted and approved in April and June 2015 (Am08-Am09).

Informed consent

Participants were provided with an information sheet written in lay language explaining the aims of the study and what would be expected of them. Questions or queries arising from this during recruitment or at the time of the interview were addressed by the researcher.

Informed consent was obtained from participants using the consent form provided in the study packs and verbal consent recorded at the time of interview. Throughout the study, participants were reminded that participation was voluntary, they could opt out at any time and that their data would be anonymised and remain confidential. The independence of KCMHR from the Ministry of Defence was stressed.

Risk protocol

An independent Medical Officer (MO) provided training on conducting interviews in an open and safe way for both the well-being of participants and the researcher. The MO remained available for on-going support for participants and the researcher throughout the interview study.

All participants expressing an interest in the study were provided with a sign-posting booklet outlining support and services for military and veteran families in areas such as employment, mental health, relationships, finances and education (Appendix 3.2.5). Where concerns were raised about minor issues, or where the researcher identified need, participants were directed to seek help from the services within this booklet.

A risk protocol was developed in the event of participants disclosing information that the researcher believed could have serious implications for their health and safety or that of others. The protocol stated that in such instances, concerns would initially be reported to the research supervisors and if required, referred onto the MO using the risk event form (Appendix

3.2.6). A statement outlining the legal requirement of researchers to inform the authorities if they became concerned about the safety of participants or that of others was included in the information sheet. The MO was available to talk to any participant who had concerns about the study or who became distressed during the interviews to provide impartial advice ensuring participants safety and well-being during their involvement in the study if they wished. The risk protocol was not initiated during any of the interviews.

Data protection

A secure password protected webpage was used for exchanging audio files and transcripts which only the researcher and transcriber had access to. Audio files and transcriptions were deleted from the webpage once transcription had been completed. Transcripts were anonymised during data checking and any potentially identifying information excluded. Audio files were deleted once coding was complete.

Hard copies of documentation were stored in locked filing cabinets in a secured room. Documents such as consent or contact information that may have identified participants were kept in a secure and separate location from interview transcripts. Only anonymised transcripts were printed or used for data analysis.

Data analysis

Choice of methodology

Framework analysis was developed by applied social policy researchers in the 1980s as a means of creating a robust qualitative methodology, particularly in the area of applied research (Ritchie and Spencer 1994). This method was selected for analysing the qualitative data as it has been shown to be beneficial for the elucidation of the potential policy implications of research and well-suited to studies using mixed methods and semi-structured interviews (Pope, Ziebland et al. 2000, Gale, Heath et al. 2013).

Framework is similar to thematic analysis, a commonly used method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns, or themes, within qualitative data. Thematic analysis codes qualitative data according to the meanings within the text and sorts these codes into overarching themes representing the original data (Braun and Clarke 2006). In thematic analysis, after familiarisation with the data, initial codes are systematically and inductively developed from elements of the raw data referring to the phenomenon or concept of interest. Codes are refined using a coding frame and sorted into relevant overarching themes, which are reviewed

and refined. Once the data fit the themes, themes can be defined and named and a thematic map is produced that gives an overview of the data (Braun and Clarke 2006). Criticisms of thematic analysis include that it is not always apparent how analyses have been conducted (Attride-Stirling 2001); for example, transparency regarding the construction of themes, how they relate to the original data and whether they adequately encompass the codes used. This has potentially negative effects on the reliability of findings in studies where the methodology has not been clearly described.

The formalised steps used in Framework analysis are intended to provide a more systematic approach to qualitative analysis, which proponents claim produces more rigorous and transparent findings in comparison to other methods (Ritchie and Lewis 2003). These steps are as follows (Lacey and Luff 2009), although there is some overlap between the last two steps (Spencer, Ritchie et al. 2003):

- Familiarisation with the data – reading transcripts, noting common words, ideas or experiences
- Identifying a thematic framework – a thematic framework is constructed either from initial coding or *a priori* themes from the literature
- Indexing – the framework is applied to the data and continually developed and refined
- Charting – using this framework, data are summarised using either quotes or summaries of the data from each participant
- Mapping and interpretation – the data is categorised and sorted into sorted into matrices and concepts or explanations defined

While a good thematic analysis can be described as covering most of the data from interviews (Joffe 2012), Framework analysis includes all data, whether it relates to a common theme or not, allowing for a more in-depth interpretation of the data to be made (Ritchie and Lewis 2003). In addition, the structured nature of this methodology means responses can be compared not only across themes but across participants and between sub-populations, adding extra richness to the analysis (Ritchie and Lewis 2003, Gale, Heath et al. 2013). Criticisms of Framework analysis concern the use of what might be considered by some to be a rigid and deductive method of analysing qualitative data, rather than an inductive data-led exercise. The use of matrices may mean quantitative researchers in particular are attracted to what appears to be a quantitatively-based qualitative technique (Gale, Heath et al. 2013). However, while the inclusion of *a priori* dimensions or themes may influence the initial stages of the analysis, the development of the initial framework and the refining of the coding framework and indexing allows the researcher to pay close attention to producing inductive

themes that are inextricably linked to the meaning of the data (Ritchie and Spencer 1994). This prevents a purely deductive analysis and ensures interpretation adheres to a qualitative approach.

Justification of methodology

Thematic and Framework analysis are similar analytical methods and each has particular strengths and weaknesses influencing which methodology might be more suitable for this thesis. In this instance, the systematic approach of Framework was considered to be the most appropriate method for the following reasons:

- The iterative nature of Framework and use of summary matrices would allow me as a researcher to move back and forth between the raw data and the different stages of analysis, drawing attention to the potential influence I had on the creation of dimensions, categories and themes. This would increase reflexivity as well as the transparency of findings for stakeholders.
- The use of matrices would allow me to compare themes between and across different groups, an important benefit of this method given the different participants included in this study (S/Ps of officers vs. non-officers, currently serving vs. ex-Serving and Army vs. RAF).
- While thematic analysis is a largely inductive process, Framework specifically allows for the inclusion of *a priori* themes from the current literature or prior analyses during the development of the initial framework as well as inductive themes stemming from data analysis. This will strengthen the mixed methods approach of this thesis, allowing me to explore findings from within the literature and ensure these elements are not missed from the coding framework.

Analytical process

The following steps were undertaken in each of the four topic areas – employment, family relationships, social networks during accompanied postings and their relationship with the military institution – and are summarised in Figure 19.

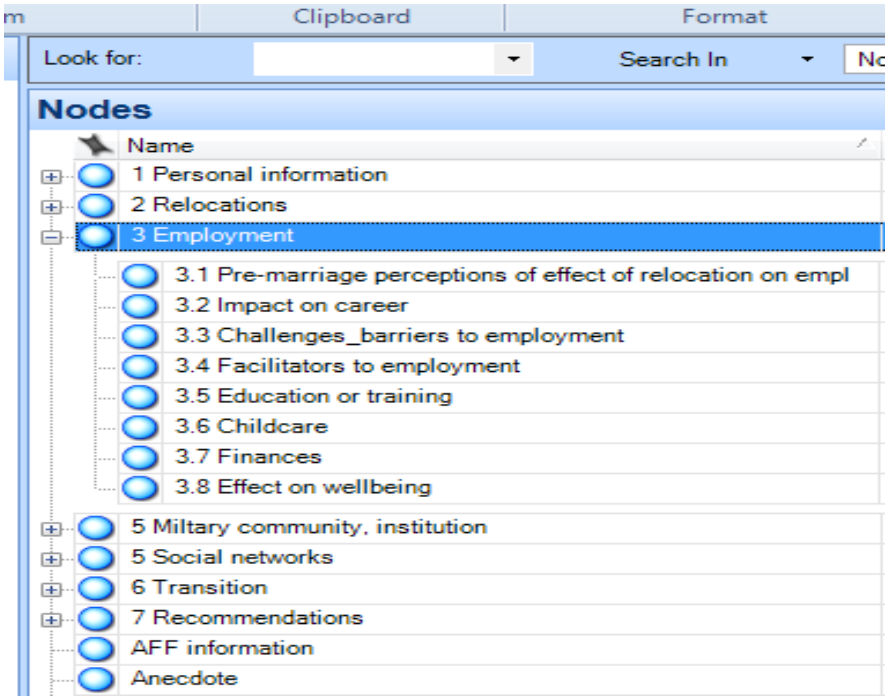
Familiarisation

Familiarisation was conducted by reading the interview transcripts in order to develop a sense of the experiences of S/Ps during accompanied postings and how these had influenced their well-being. This step was partially undertaken while checking the accuracy of the transcripts against the audio recordings.

Thematic framework

Following familiarisation, a thematic framework was created to organise the data (Appendix 3.3.1). This largely followed the structure of the interview schedule. Codes were organised into similar topic areas with an associated code for well-being for each section (Figure 18). Data was coded as relating to well-being if women inferred any psychological or emotional impact from their experiences or if interview transcripts referred to any of the *a priori* well-being themes.

Figure 18: Example of thematic framework in NVivo – S/P employment



A priori themes were based on previous literature primarily concerning the relationship between S/Ps and the military institution and relocation were included; the identity of S/Ps, the process of incorporation into the role of Service personnel and the effect of military life on agency or autonomy (Finch 1983, Harrell 2001, Jervis 2011, Blakely, Hennessy et al. 2014b). Additional potential themes were noted during interviews (e.g. choice, grief and loss, hierarchy) and familiarisation with the data (e.g. connectedness). By including *a priori* themes, I was able to address issues specifically experienced by S/Ps in the UK during accompanied postings as well as those previously highlighted in the literature, improving the comparability and applicability of this research to the wider literature. However, the iterative nature of Framework ensured such themes were included only if they were supported by the data.

In order to ensure the framework applied to interviews from across the different participant groups, a selection of interviews from different groups within the study were selected to

create the initial framework. Data from S/Ps of officer and NCO Service personnel, ex-Service and RAF were represented during this step.

Indexing and sorting

During the indexing and sorting stage, the framework was applied to the remaining interviews and data *indexed* or coded accordingly. Audio files were referred to in order to accurately interpret participant meaning. Once each interview was indexed by hand, the process was repeated within QSR NVivo© (QSR International Pty Ltd 2012) to improve data management. The thematic framework was continually updated and refined throughout the following steps. An example of the indexing process is included in Appendix 3.3.2.

Charting

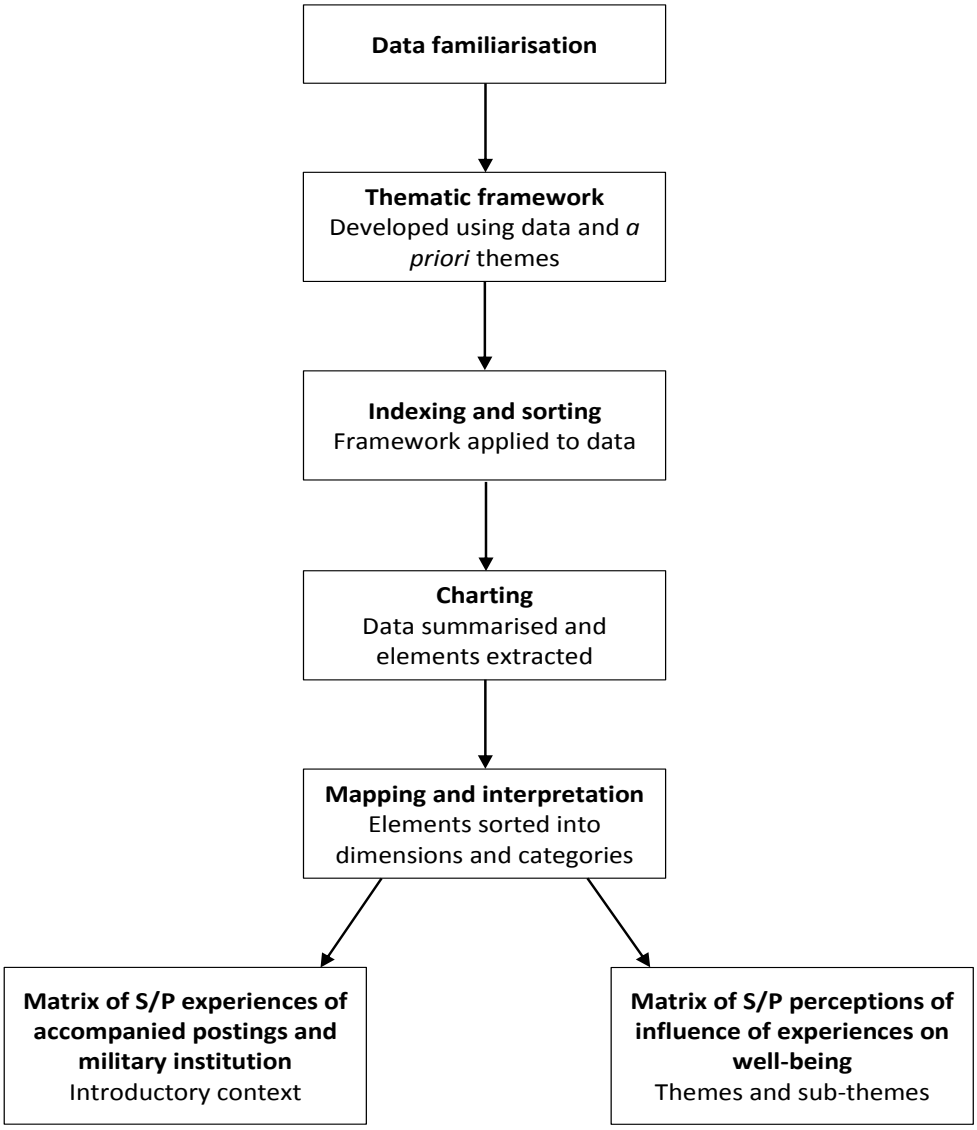
Once data was indexed, S/P experiences of employment, family relations and social networks during accompanied postings and of their relationship with the military institution were summarised for each participant according to the codes of the thematic framework. Participant perceptions of how these experiences had influenced their well-being were also summarised according to the framework. Details or *elements* were then extracted from participant summaries. An example of the charting process is included in Appendix 3.3.3.

Mapping and interpretation

Elements extracted from participant summaries were grouped together into topic area (e.g. employment, family relations, military institution) and sorted into *dimensions* and *categories* according to the similarity of their content. For example, one dimension included within employment were issues related to a lack of childcare because of the absence of Service personnel, while another referred to a lack of informal childcare support from friends and family. These dimensions were both combined into the category of childcare.

Once the data was categorised, it was used to create two sets of matrices for each of the four topic areas. The first matrix in each area categorised S/P descriptions of their experiences and was used to provide an introductory section for each qualitative section. The second matrix categorised S/P perceptions of how these experiences had influenced their well-being and was used to create themes and sub-themes based on *a priori* and inductive themes. To create a robust and transparent analysis, and situate well-being fully within the lived experiences of S/Ps, each element of perceived well-being was linked back to a specific experience. For example, descriptions of experiencing difficulty making social connections with other S/Ps were linked to descriptions of feeling isolated or disconnected from the community.

Figure 19: Qualitative data analysis diagram



Thematic diagrams were created demonstrating the different themes and subthemes influencing S/P well-being and linkages within sections identified.

Differences according to rank (officer/non-officer), Service (Army/RAF) and serving status (currently serving/left Service) were explored within the major themes and subthemes of S/P well-being by noting how various groups of S/Ps described the influence of accompanied postings on their well-being. Linkages between themes were explored.

Reflexivity

I undertook a number of steps in order to reflect on my own role in creating the data obtained from the interviews and in generating and developing the themes emerging from the data. Before the interviews began, I considered how best to present myself both as a researcher and

as an active participant in these interviews. As I do not have a connection with the military, I was aware I may appear as an outsider to members of the military community, which may affect rapport with participants. I was honest with those participants who asked about my own military history but ensured I was aware of basic military terminology prior to conducting the interviews so as to appear to have at least some understanding of military life. During interviews, I made notes of any relevant terminology used by participants to help position myself as a competent researcher in the eyes of the women interviewed, such as welfare terminology ("NAAFI" or Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes) or the commonality of usage of terms such as "on patch" (living in family accommodation on a military base). By opting to speak the same "language" as women taking part in the study, I aimed to build rapport and trust with participants. However, I tried to balance this with a degree of unfamiliarity with the military. In positioning myself in this way, part-insider, part-outsider, I sought to seek a balance between allowing participants to speak freely about their experiences and well-being without the need to constantly explain their meaning while at the same time encouraging participants to expand on meaning where it was important to the aims of the study. In doing so, I hoped participants would feel they had an opportunity to express their opinions about military life while also contributing to greater knowledge of the experiences of S/Ps during accompanied postings. I took care in interviews not to lead participants into answers that aligned with *a priori* themes or my own conceptions of military life as a S/P by using probes and non-verbal cues to encourage women to explain their experiences in their own words.

During and following each interview, I made notes regarding the topics discussed by participants. These included a short biography of each participant, the most salient issues for them during accompanied postings and influences on well-being, overall thoughts on the interview and any potential themes. These notes performed two roles; firstly, I was able to reflect on my interview technique and improve how I posed questions or probed for further information and secondly, they allowed me to reflect on my role as a creator of knowledge within the interviews.

During the analysis of themes affecting well-being, the use of Framework analysis allowed me to move between the data and themes to confirm the accuracy of themes. For the *a priori* themes, this iterative process ensured the analysis was data-led rather than directed by prior assumptions of the influence of accompanied postings on S/P well-being. While this process was used to check the validity of both *a priori* and inductive themes, I took additional time to interrogate the data within the *a priori* themes, such as a perceived lack of personal agency or challenges to S/P identity, to ensure I was not over-interpreting the data. Reflecting on the

findings with my supervisors and representatives from AFF at various stages of analysis also aided in confirming the data accurately supported the identified themes. In undertaking such steps, I was able to apply academic rigour to the data analysis and interpretation, ensuring participant experiences and their perceptions of how these had influenced their well-being were accurately reflected rather than my own perceptions of what experiences may mean for women.

For a researcher who was new to qualitative analysis at the time of this thesis, the iterative nature of this process helped to improve reflexivity and recognise the active and dynamic role I played in the creation of themes drawn from the qualitative data. In particular, the iterative process allowed me to ensure my background as a married, white, middle-class feminist with my own views on what military life may mean for women in a relationship with Service personnel did not unduly influence the co-generation of data with participants or the creation of themes. These included initially strong assumptions such as most S/Ps preferring a traditional family life where they stayed at home with their children, an inability to seek out employment even if they wished and poorer mental health as a result of social isolation and normative pressures from within the military community regarding roles and behaviours. I also assumed women experienced pressure to defer to the higher power of not only the military institution but to the higher status of their husband in his role as the primary worker in an overtly masculine organisation.

I decided to reflect on and confront these views prior to interviews rather than try and set these pre-conceived ideas aside. In doing so, I felt I could be more aware of instances of leading participants in their answers during interviews and prepared to interrogate whether or not the data supported the theme or whether I was subconsciously aligning my findings with my own pre-conceived ideas of military life. In order to counter these assumptions and prevent them from interfering with data collection and analysis, I tried to envision the experiences of women as restricted but still with some element of choice – women chose to marry Service personnel and chose to continue moving alongside their husband despite the difficulties – even though this view disregarded the more practical ramifications of opting to leave their relationship.

Once I started the interviews, some of the women spoke about the active choices they made in weighing up their employment and family arrangements. This directly challenged some of my assumptions, leaving me with an appreciation of the fact that some of the women were content with their situation and therefore their experiences had little to no influence on their

well-being. As well as the impact of gendered expectations and norms on women, I did consider the role of ethnicity prior to the qualitative study and was prepared to discuss this if I had any participants who were the S/P of Foreign and Commonwealth Service personnel. However, all participants were English and such issues were no discussed. I have therefore assumed that ethnicity was not an important issue for the women interviewed. Class is another issue of importance in a hierarchical society such as the military. While not directly addressed, the focus on differences between officer and non-officer ranks was intended to reflect the class division within the military community and I have focused on this within the qualitative study as much as the data would allow.

Validity

As already discussed, the collaboration with the Army Families Federation (AFF) was utilised as a form of respondent validation. Feedback was provided on the interview schedule to ensure that this was appropriate in order to capture the experiences of S/Ps and framed in a way that was acceptable for participants.

In order to feedback the findings at various stages of data collection and analysis, regular meetings were held with representatives from AFF who had a remit for policy and research in relation to the mental health and well-being of the military families they represent. This helped to ensure themes and subthemes identified from the data were clear, relevant and credible to those working with S/Ps or with experience of military life themselves. AFF representatives reported the themes that emerged from the data reflected their own perceptions and experiences of accompanied postings and their relationship with the military institution. Their feedback also assisted with situating the findings within wider military policy and procedures concerning military families and upcoming changes that may give greater precedence to some the findings.

Terminology

The term S/Ps was used in the qualitative study in order to provide continuity across the different sections of the thesis. However, the use of this term during the qualitative component was an issue I debated, particularly when it came to discussing some of the themes concerning identity and agency. I am aware it may seem incongruous to frame women solely through their relationship with their husband or partner while at the same time discussing their issues and concerns relating to independence and autonomy. I am also aware that being labelled as a military wife is not appreciated by some spouses and partners. The use of this term was in no way intended to overlook or diminish the agency or identity of women or

negate the validity of their experiences. Given the main theoretical approach of this thesis, I felt the use of this term was appropriate where it reminded the reader that the mental health and well-being of these women is subject to an additional layer of social and cultural expectation through the presence of the military institution in their everyday lives. During this section I referred to participants as women in order to attempt to alleviate some of this tension and acknowledge their independence.

Chapter 12 – Qualitative findings

Objectives

The overall objective of the qualitative study was to explore the effect of accompanied postings on the well-being of spouses and partners (S/Ps) of Service personnel (objective 4). The specific objectives were to;

- describe S/P experiences of employment, relationships and social networks during accompanied postings and their relationship with the military institution
- explore S/P perceptions of how these experiences influenced their well-being
- explore similarities and differences in S/P experiences and perceptions between S/Ps of officer and non-officer ranked Service personnel
- explore S/P perceptions of influences on their well-being following the transition of personnel out of Service

Description of the sample

Nineteen interviews were conducted with women who were the S/Ps of current or former Service personnel – all were in married relationships of between 5 and 20 or more years (Table 28). Most S/Ps were aged between 30-40, with three S/Ps in their 50s, and all had between one and four children. Eleven were S/Ps of Service personnel of officer rank and eight were S/Ps of non-commissioned officers (NCOs); all were of Sergeant and above. Fourteen women were or had been affiliated with the Army through their relationship with their husband and 5 were or had been affiliated with the RAF. Six S/Ps were married to personnel who had left Service within the last 5 years. All of the women had experienced at least one accompanied posting in the last 5 years or in the 5 years before their husband left Service.

Table 28: Qualitative study participants

Rank	Age group (years)	Pseudonym	Service branch	Transitioned	No. years married	Total no. of accompanied postings	Overseas accompanied postings	Occupational area
NCO	30s	**Courtney**	RAF	No	5-9	3	Yes	Teacher
		Mary	Army	Yes	10-14	3	Yes	Health services
		Allison	Army	No	10-14	5	Yes	Educational support
		Dee	Army	No	15-19	8	Yes	Educational support
	40s	**Molly**	Army	No	5-9	4	No	Educational support
		Gina	RAF	No	10-14	3	Yes	Teacher
		Janet	Army	Yes	15-19	4	Yes	Health services
		Linda	Army	Yes	20+	8	Yes	Stay at home parent
Officer	30s	**Jennifer**	Army	No	10-14	8	No	Educational support
		Louise	RAF	Yes	10-14	5	No	Self-employed
	40s	**Toni**	RAF	No	10-14	4	No	Teacher
		Anna	Army	No	10-14	5	No	Health services
		Joan	Army	No	15-19	9	Yes	Health services
		Kathleen	Army	No	20+	5	Yes	Stay at home parent
		Kim	Army	No	20+	7	Yes	Military charity
		Suzy	Army	No	20+	>10	Yes	Financial services
	50s	**Carrie**	Army	Yes	20+	9	Yes	Self-employed
		Kristen	Army	Yes	20+	>10	Yes	Educational support
		Melissa	RAF	No	20+	>10	Yes	Corrections services

Spouses/partners experiences of employment during accompanied postings and the influences on well-being

This section presents spouses and partners (S/Ps) descriptions of the impact of accompanied postings on their careers and employment, the perceived facilitators and barriers to employment and the effects of changes to their employment on family finances. How these experiences influenced S/P well-being was then explored.

1. S/Ps experiences of employment during accompanied postings

1.1 Impact on career

Most women described negative effects on their career arising from accompanied postings such as career disruption, an inability to plan their career, and competition with their husband's career. A minority of women explained that they were able to continue working throughout accompanied postings, which could add variety and additional skills to their work history. The career issues discussed by S/Ps did not differ by Service personnel rank, with women married to officer and NCO ranked personnel reporting similar experiences. Instead, experiences differed according to whether women reported having professional careers or a strong desire to work.

Several women described the negative impacts of accompanied postings on their career progression (Table 37, Appendix 4.1). In particular, a lack of continuity across employment roles, being employed on temporary contracts, or not being able to proceed into higher level or management positions as a result of accompanied postings were described as hindering career development.

> *"I didn't realise that I wouldn't really be able to make very much progress with my career because I'd be often stuck on a pay scale… you can't actually advance anywhere. You're just kind of kept on a temporary contract because they know that eventually you're going to leave."* Gina, 40s (NCO, RAF)

> *"I dropped back down to being a classroom teacher from being a Head of Department. Because I couldn't turn up to interview and say "I'd like to be your Head of Department for the next year and a half and then I'm going to go and you'll have to do this all again!" That's not practical."* Toni, 40s (officer, RAF)

Careers could also be disrupted because of accompanied postings, with women describing having to wait to start their careers or to put their careers on hold while overseas or until their husband/partner has left Service. Some women explained how they felt their husband's career took precedence over their own.

> *"…this is my time now because [my husband]… was due out in December, for me to progress with the career that I wanted… "* Melissa, 50s (officer, RAF)

> *"…you kind of end up very much having to … focus on your husband's career, therefore it affects what your… what you're doing."* Kim, 40s (officer, Army)

The disruptions and barriers to career progressions women experienced meant some had had to alter their career path in order to take advantage of the work opportunities available to them following an accompanied posting. This often resulted in underemployment, where women were overqualified for the role they were in or accepted positions they were underqualified for in order to continue with working.

> *"… I've ended up having to adapt other people's roles sometimes actually taking on stuff I hadn't done before that I just end up, well I'll do that because I'm still working.. it's a bit muddled really..."* Gina, 40s (NCO, RAF)

> *"I've taken… if you like a down step… Actually… I am misqualified."* Molly, 30s (NCO, Army)

Women described uncertainty about whether they would be able to find work following accompanied postings and about what work would be available.

> *"… [you're] wondering 'Am I going to get another job? Am I going to get another income?' You know and it's never really been clear in your mind what you're going to get. It's always let's just see what comes up. If there's going to be a surprise!"* Gina, NCO, RAF, 40s

Some women reported that career planning could be difficult due to the lack of options open to them. While some were able to make the most of the employment opportunities available to them, others discussed how accompanied postings and moving alongside their husband had meant they were unable to pursue a career at all.

"… [the jobs on CV] coincide[s] with an area that my husband's going to be in rather than me sifting, scanning for a job and thinking 'yeah that's where I'd like to be and that's what I'd like to do'." Gina, 40s (NCO, RAF)

"I did manage to get jobs as I followed him round. But they were very much jobs rather than careers. But that suited me cause I had small children…" Kristen, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

Achieving a balance between work and family was another factor impacting on S/P employment, which could be heightened by the additional difficulties of maintaining or looking for work following accompanied postings. Some women described how this meant opting to give up employment in order to remain together as a family during accompanied postings or remaining at home with children in order to counter some of the negative effects on them from frequent moves.

"…the home, you know the family, would always need to come first. So anything employment-wise, you know if I was focussed on a career that would have to take second place. And I think obviously if I was focussed on my career… I wouldn't be able to have that opportunity to move around with him…" Kathleen, 40s (officer, Army)

"… I thought I was going to go straight into business and be able to operate as a businesswoman which didn't happen because of children and one of us I felt had to be static, and because we kept moving." Carrie, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

For women who described aspirations to stay at home with their children, the decision to choose family over their employment or career was reported to have been more straightforward. This was more common among S/Ps of Service personnel of officer rank. However, this difference may not necessarily be related to rank as these women also discussed how they would have been likely to be a stay at home parent regardless of whether they had married a member of the Armed Forces or not.

"… one of my main priorities in life is that we are a family together and therefore if it means that I have to say goodbye to friends and if I have to say goodbye to a job or whatever, then I will do it because I believe ultimately that my family comes first… if we are both vying for our own things then we can't be together. And so one of us has to give up something." Kathleen, 40s (officer, Army)

A less common view among participants was that accompanied postings had no or a minimal effect on their career. Some women explained that they were able to maintain participation in the labour market and were not concerned about the type or skill level of the job they obtained.

> *"… I've always worked every posting that we've been to… it's not like a high-powered job. It's been like a cleaner or working at a supermarket or a school."* Dee, 30s (NCO, Army)

> *"No matter where we've gone, I've always ended up finding a job."* Melissa, 50s (officer, RAF)

Other women discussed the positive aspects of accompanied postings for their careers in terms of increased challenge and variety to the jobs they had and improved knowledge of their sector.

> *"… [military life] probably… made [career] more interesting if I'm honest… I did different jobs…"* Janet, 40s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

> *"I've had brilliant jobs. I've adapted well and I've come out it with great experience, promotions and very good resumes."* Melissa, 50s (officer, RAF)

1.2 Facilitators and barriers of S/P employment

S/Ps reported a number of factors influencing their employment opportunities, including the duration and location of postings, availability of childcare, the nature of the job market in their locale, appropriate skills and experience and attitudes and support from employers and colleagues (Table 38, Appendix 4.1). Barriers to employment were generally the opposite of facilitators (Table 39, Appendix 4.1).

a. Accompanied postings

The frequent accompanied postings experienced by military families meant some S/Ps described regularly having to give up their employment. This left some women unable to work or maintain professional networks.

> *"… we leave every couple of years so then you have to go and do something else."* Janet, 40s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

"*… [moves] were quite frequent which lead to me not being able to go back to work and you know and to maintain perhaps some of those networks that I'd had."* Joan, 40s (officer, Army)

Furthermore, some women explained how the disruption of accompanied postings meant they required a period of settling in before they felt ready to start looking for work even though this could limit the amount of time they then had available to commit to employers.

"sometimes by the time you've got someone you've got yourself settled in, you think 'Right I'll start looking for a job', you might not get one for a couple of months and you think 'Well I'm going soon… I'm going in eighteen months!'" Suzy, 40s (officer, Army)

Uncertainty about the timing of moves during short or delayed postings meant S/Ps could question whether it would be worth looking for work.

"… there's no point getting a job for six months. That wouldn't have been fair on an employer and it wouldn't have been fair on my younger children because I wasn't going to put them into childcare for a brief period of time." Molly, 40s (NCO, Army)

In contrast, S/Ps of Service personnel who described being posted for longer than usual were more readily able to find work.

"obviously things have moved on in the Army now recently and you know people are getting posted… staying in places longer which does obviously make that [it] a little bit easier." Kim, 40s (officer, Army)

Posting location could be another barrier to employment especially if postings were to isolated areas or bases or overseas. Postings away from urban areas were described as hindering employment options because of a lack of opportunities or poor access to transport.

"… there was nothing within this geographical area… So it was really waiting for an opportunity … it did take a few years… if my husband had had a different career, I think I probably would have pushed to come back to [urban area]." Anna, 40s (officer, Army)

"I wasn't driving either which didn't help. So if I had to get a job, it would have had to have been very local." Courtney, 30s (NCO, RAF)

Employment on overseas postings was described as being complicated by language barriers and policies that restricted working off base. This could create intense competition for any available jobs on base among S/Ps.

> *"… I don't know what jobs I would have done because you know when you're in Germany there's only the jobs on site, of which I don't think there were many… I don't know what jobs you would do."* Suzy, 40s (officer, Army)

> *"… the jobs were so limited in the military… then everyone wanted them. So you know one job would come up and there would be hundreds of women wanting the same job..."* Mary, 30s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

For S/Ps with qualifications in particular professions, securing employment could be hindered if accompanied postings were to areas with low staff turnover in their chosen field. Low staff turnover could lead to particularly lengthy waits for women who were seeking a job that fitted with their family circumstances or with their particular skills and experience.

> *"… [finding work] took about five… four or five months, but the timing was actually was really good for family arrangement… it worked out well."* Molly, 40s (NCO, Army)

> *"… we're in quite an isolated area and most of the schools, from experience as a teacher, when you work in a place like that most teachers tend to stay in post until they retire or whatever… it was quite difficult… it was quite static."* Courtney, 30s (NCO, RAF)

b. Childcare

The availability, or lack of, of childcare was commonly mentioned as an important facilitator and barrier to S/P employment. Women who discussed this as a problem described how limited options or waiting lists for some facilities made accessing childcare difficult. S/Ps who used formal childcare explained that crèche hours were too limited to provide the cover they required, particularly if they were seeking employment outside of normal working hours.

> *"… the military nursery… that was full… it wasn't the end of the world, you know I didn't have a job [at the time] … had I have done, childcare would have been you know really tricky."* Joan, 40s (officer, Army)

"…I chose a job where I potentially was working you know until eight o'clock in the evening or Saturdays and Sundays… that nursery didn't cater for things that late. They were sort of more… for your office hours." Louise, 30s (officer, RAF)

Many women reported that the cost of childcare was prohibitive compared to the low wages they would receive from the work that was available to them.

"… childcare costs… just outweighed the wages… I said you know I don't want to go to work purely just to pay for my child to be looked after by someone else." Linda, 40s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

Women who were able to access formal childcare reported the benefits of this in helping them achieve a balance between employment and maintaining their family responsibilities.

"… we've always just paid privately… for childcare… it's been like any other job… we've always found good quality childcare in the different locations." Anna, 40s (officer, Army)

"… a childminder would look after them both if I needed it… one of the girls I worked with… she was a childminder so she looked after [son] in [Europe]… you have to pay obviously so you just pay. But it was worth it to me..." Janet, 40s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

In addition to describing difficulties accessing formal childcare, women reported that informal care from friends and family was not available due to the distance some military families were from home. Although links were made within the military community to order to try and obtain practical support such as childcare, S/Ps described feeling reluctant to ask other S/Ps for help.

"…as a military wife you're not surrounded by your family and you don't have that back-up support for you know childcare… if your husbands away … you can find yourself pulled in two different directions, wanting to maybe [work] because its hours or needing to do extra hours and unable to actually find the childcare to be able to do it…" Louise, 30s (officer, RAF, transitioned)

"… I've currently asked my sister if she can come from [her home] to look after them for two hours on a Monday evening… if she can't come then… I don't go to that meeting…" Molly, 40s (NCO, Army)

Some women who were married to Service personnel with positions that had reliable working hours described how this meant they were able to rely on their partners' support for childcare. However, this was not a situation experienced by many women and the bulk of managing family responsibilities fell to them.

"… when my husband's around we manage quite well... sometimes I'm in work quite late with staff meetings and things he picks them up cause they fit in with RAF hours." Courtney, 30s (NCO, RAF)

"*…I can't rely on [husband]… to pick up children or drop them off. Because there is no working pattern, it's not like a nine to five job he does. He's away an awful lot..."* Jennifer, 30s (officer, Army)

The lack of both formal and informal childcare meant that many women who did work had to limit their hours of employment in line with their family responsibilities.

"I ended up lifeguarding in order to fit it around the children… you couldn't just apply for necessarily the job you wanted to do, it had to be something that would fit around the children." Kim, 40s (officer, Army)

"…you have to fit around your children… I haven't got a family around to say "Oh can you pick [son] up from school?"… you do have to, you know, fit round them which is harder than what it would be if you lived at home." Allison, 30s (NCO, Army)

c. Skills and experience

The skills and experiences of women was another common factor influencing the likelihood and nature of S/P employment following accompanied postings. Having a wide set of skills to draw on improved the employability of some S/Ps, whereas for others, having a specific set of professional skills allowed them to find to work easily.

"… I got a… wider range of practical skills than more academic skills, and that's how I got the job." Janet, 40s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

"…I always done childcare and sort of tried to stick with that and jobs coming up and things I've been pretty lucky" Allison, 30s (NCO, Army)

Some S/Ps reported how accompanied postings prevented them from gaining qualifications or from working at all, leading to gaps in their employment history. Both could result in delays securing work.

"… I felt I was kind of a jack of all trades, but had no real qualifications… I didn't ever get anything out of the job to take away with me. [Employers] want to know if you've got this NVQ or what courses you've done and they're not really interested in the experience so much… they want kind of certificates you can wave at them." Mary, 30s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

"… [husband] took the regiment out to [Europe]. And then we were in [Europe] for two years … all of a sudden you've kind of been out of the workplace… for quite a considerable time… you're no longer that current..." Joan, 40s (officer, Army)

Volunteering or online courses were used by S/Ps to secure current work experience or to update their skills and qualifications. Women married to officers were the only participants to mention this avenue back into employment. Other women described how they used their own experiences as S/Ps to find work with Armed Forces charities or set up their own business.

"… I did some volunteering to start with just to get me back into… a workplace environment. So that was good… I didn't have the pressure of people expecting too much of you because you're not paid!…." Suzy, 40s (officer, Army)

"…even though I've moved around with my husband, I was able to use my knowledge and experience from my last location in this new location… I deal with people every day that get posted and I deal with people that are being moved to locations where I've lived and things like that." Kim, 40s (officer, Army)

Despite schemes to assist S/P with training and education, women reported not being aware of the options available to them at the time. Others were unable to pursue further education due to cost, moving because of accompanied postings or a lack of employer or family support, creating a further barrier to employment.

"I didn't realise that we could access training and I had thought about training and then I was thinking my children, but secondly I thought my age was against me which is probably a bit daft really!" Carrie, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

"… I'd love to do an MA. I've wanted to do that for the last six years, but I haven't been able to really because of the posting that we're on… I didn't want to do a distance thing so that's kind of held me back a little bit." Gina, 40s (NCO, RAF)

d. Characteristics and contacts

Some women described how they used their contacts and personal qualities to find employment opportunities. Connections within military and civilian communities could provide women with opportunistic avenues into employment. Internal factors, such as persistence, a desire to work or having a positive or confident personality, were also described as helping women take advantage of these opportunities to gain employment.

"…I'd been helping in my children's school and they just asked me if I was interested [in work]... it was a… local school. And I'd just been a parent helper and I was on the PTA. And this opportunity came up … and then it kind of developed into something a little bit more." Kathleen, 40s (officer, Army)

"… I'm a great believer that in every negative situation, there's always a positive… a lot of it is about how you mentally approach… approach a situation." Kim, 40s (officer, Army)

e. Attitudes of employers

Concerns were raised about employer attitudes towards S/Ps. Perceptions that women may be discriminated against because they were married to Service personnel and therefore likely to move shortly were expressed by some women.

"… you're a risk, aren't you [to employers]? If you're forces because people aren't going to put time, effort and money into you if you're then going to leave." Molly, 40s (NCO, Army)

"…my CV looked a little bit patchy… I was moving a lot so I had lots of little jobs on it. I was worried about this idea of 'Are they going to work out I'm a forces mum, forces wife,

they know I'm going to move on! Are they going to employ me?'… I was conscious that I was going to look a little bit nomadic." Kristen, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

Negative attitudes among employers towards women, or women with children were reported by a small number of women. However, S/Ps did mention these experiences had occurred some years ago.

"…it was very much an old boys' network and you know sort of pet the female on the head… a lot of the posts were filled with ex-service personnel… not only do you have that sort of old mentality of the old boys' club from the military… [you had] that old boys' mentality within the civil service." Louise, 30s (officer, RAF, transitioned)

"… as soon as you mention you're in the Army, that's it. As soon as you mentioned you have children, small children, that's it." Carrie, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

In contrast, employers who were perceived to have positive or understanding attitudes towards S/Ps were described as having assisted in facilitating employment and helping women negotiate some of the tensions they faced between work and family.

"I worked… at an Army school. So yeah they were used to people coming and going anyway." Mary, 30s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

"… they were deciding to change [my working hours]… I didn't want [child] in breakfast and afterschool clubs because I think that their days are long enough as it is. So I obviously explained all that [to employer] and they were very good… they were happy for me to do the hours that I'm doing until I finish." Allison, 30s (NCO, Army)

1.3 Impact on finances

The finances of military families could be reduced by the loss of S/P income following accompanied postings although none of the families reported serious problems with debt as a result (Table 40, Appendix 4.1).

"…the move here… they had that new ability to choose where to put you on the pay scale, they actually put me right down to the, a basic rate… which has an impact on pension and all sorts." Courtney, 30s (NCO, RAF)

None of the women stated that they were required to work because of insufficient wages from their husband's employment in the military. However, there were variations in the financial implications of S/Ps unemployment according to Service personnel rank. S/Ps of officers more commonly described their husband's income as being sufficient for them to live on and reported no major financial concerns resulting from accompanied postings or from living on one income. However, S/Ps of NCO ranked personnel more commonly referred to allowances intended to cover the cost of accompanied postings as being insufficient and reported that they were required to work in order to cover the expenses incurred as well as the increased costs of living to the UK compared to overseas postings.

> *"…[no financial problems] at that rank. No... it's more you can't afford the luxuries like to go on holiday… things like that."* Suzy, 40s (officer, Army)

> *"…obviously now we know we can afford [mortgage at this] amount, but next in two years' time when possibly we might move and I may not be in a position where I can contribute financially in the same way, that has an effect…. "* Courtney, 30s (NCO, RAF)

Although some S/Ps reported financial worries due to lower family incomes and the increased cost of living in new locations, all were able to adapt to their changing financial situations by limiting spending until they were financially stable.

> *"… you sort of get used to "Right ok that's what we have a month" and then you move and then it's a case of "Ok now we haven't got that"! It's just really trying to put things into place that… you know for when that happens that you've got a bit by so while you are looking for work."* Allison, 30s (NCO, Army)

1.4 Experiences following transition

Following the transition of personnel out of Service, women described how the stability of living in one area and proximity to informal childcare from family members meant they were able to quickly find employment and recommence their careers (Table 41, Appendix 4.1).

> *"… my teaching career took off very, very quickly. I quickly became… management within school… normally people have been teaching for ten or fifteen, twenty years before they do what I'm doing. And I've only been doing it seven so I've caught up, I suppose."*
> Kristen, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

"…I've got the support of grandparents around me and other family members that can help with my childcare… even in the job he's in now, every now and then he works away. But it doesn't affect my job because I've got the childcare support." Mary, 30s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

Some S/Ps described financial difficulties adjusting to the increased cost of living in civilian communities, particularly if their husband had problems finding steady employment following their transition out of Service.

"… you've now got to find money for the extra rent… fuel which we weren't paying before because we lived on the camp so we cycled… your rents going to go up… you've got to take into account you know the additional Council tax or you know the fuel might rise… it was a bit of a struggle the first couple of years, in fact probably a bit longer than that!" Louise, 30s (officer, RAF, transitioned)

"…he's got to work because we've got a mortgage… he draws his pension now, but… it isn't enough for to pay our mortgage…" Janet, 40s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

2. The influence of S/P employment experiences during accompanied postings on well-being

Four major themes were identified illustrating how S/P well-being was influenced by their employment experiences during accompanied postings (Figure 20 (Table 42, Appendix 4.1)):

- challenges to S/P **identity** as a *military wife* and *mother* versus that of *worker*
- limitations to S/P **agency** in relation to *choice and control* regarding employment, the *concessions* women were required to make in their careers within a military context and relinquishing *financial independence*
- a positive or negative sense of **self-worth** provided by employment or unemployment
- **connectedness** with others through the use of employment as a social outlet for S/Ps

2.1 Identity

The employment experiences of S/Ps during accompanied postings resulted in challenges to the *identity* of S/Ps due to competing tensions between the different social roles women performed as mothers and wives and the importance of work in identity construction. The tensions between these different roles and the issues women faced in achieving a sense of balance between them was described as negatively influencing well-being through feelings of guilt and a perceived loss of status. Positive influences were also reported, with women able to

reclaim a sense of independence and self, outside of the military community. There were three sub-themes comprising this theme; *worker***,** *military wife* and *mother*.

a. Worker

Employment was an integral part of their self-construction and identity for some S/Ps. This was not in relation to any particular profession or occupation but the identity that being in work bestowed on women and the sense of purpose and achievement gained from working. Among these women, an inability to seek out or secure work had implications for their sense of self, purpose or value, resulting in a perceived loss of status that was difficult to cope with. Such an identity was often in opposition with their identities as military wives and mothers.

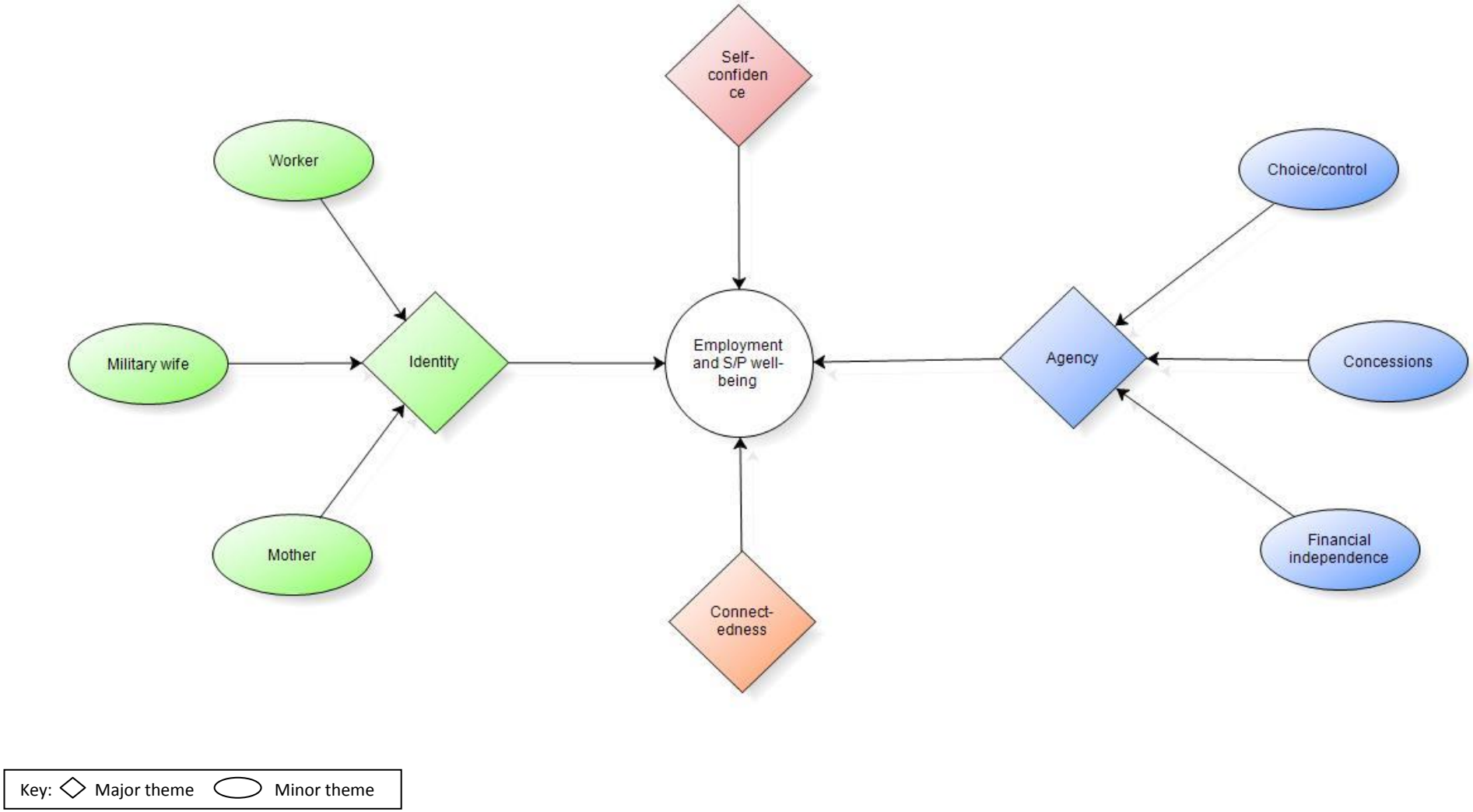
The contribution of employment to identity was important for some women, with some describing how "*your job becomes part of your identity*" [Kim, 40s (officer, Army)]. Employment provided a sense of stability or an important point of reference in regards to the identity of S/Ps. Such perceptions were strong intrinsic motivations for women to seek out work.

> *"…[work] is part of my identity… it is part of who I am … the move that I found most difficult was when I was on maternity leave … after that maternity leave I think I really wanted to just get back to a little bit of who I am and what I know. So going back to work was really important."* Anna, 40s (officer, Army)

The inability of women to find work following accompanied postings could influence their self-perceptions of their value and status. For some S/Ps, unemployment caused them to question their contribution and wider purpose and value to their families, with negative influences on their moods and emotions.

> *"… [not working]… affects my moods… I get quite down about it and because I like to be able to do something) to contribute even if it… buy the week's shopping…. it's something and it does get me down."* Dee, 30s (NCO, Army)

Figure 20: Thematic diagram of the influence of S/P employment experiences during accompanied postings on well-being



For others, their perceived sense of value was related to their value as a worker. Women who did not feel suitably recognised for their skills and experience, either financially or through the jobs offered to them, described how they felt the offers made to them were disrespectful to their value and abilities as employees.

> *"I felt like I've been getting employed on the cheap. And I recognise now that whenever I move that potentially could always happen…that's a big deal for me I feel!"* Courtney, 30s (NCO, RAF)

Other women described how the loss of their job because of accompanied postings led to a loss of status. Women who had moved overseas described how the process of finding a job left them feeling they had relinquished their previous professional identity and become dependent on their husband.

> *"…you get to [Europe] and then you become a dependent. And basically you lose any status you've ever had and you have to go through a [job search] process which is… quite demeaning… I was quite high where I was and I'm suddenly having to do typing tests to even get into their pool of employees."* Molly, 40s (NCO, Army)

For other women, the benefits of employment were less about providing an identity separate to that of military wife or mother, and more to do with creating a sense of purpose and direction in their life. These women were largely content to take any form of employment in order to consider themselves to be productive or contributing in some way.

> *"…I've been working six months since moving up here and I've taken a down step… from a well-being point of view, it's good because I'd rather be out doing something of a lower pay, a lower grade, meeting people in the community, rather than being at home."* Molly, 40s (NCO, Army)

For these S/Ps, the type of job they were doing and the status associated with it was not reported to concern them greatly, provided they were working in some kind of role.

> *"…I didn't feel as if I were underachieving or if I was, you know, is this what I've come to. You know I didn't feel like that. It didn't make me feel that way."* Janet, 40s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

b. Military wife

Women married to Service personnel described how they were ascribed the identity of military wife within the community because of their relationship with their husband. Employment could help create an identity for S/Ps outside of these incorporated identities, allowing them to re-establish their independence, even if only within the working environment. This sub-theme was described by S/Ps of both officer and non-officer personnel.

The resulting tension between their own identity and that ascribed to them as a 'military wife' could become a driver for S/Ps to seek out employment. One such avenue for women to reclaim their identity was through establishing connections and relationships with civilians through employment. This provided a release for women from proscribed identities based on their relationship with their husband, allowing them to reassert their independence and regain a sense of self that may have diminished when they had become part of the military community.

> *"…it's nice to just be you, just be Allison and not "Oh your husband's [rank] [surname]"… you're your own person and you're not sort of classed with your husband as such… that's nice."* Allison, 30s (NCO, Army)

> *"… if I didn't work it would drive me mad! …Because I think I have lost a bit of my identity being married to someone in the military."* Gina, 40s (NCO, RAF)

In addition to this, some women explained how employment provided a connection between women and their location that went beyond their position in the military community and their relationship with their husband. This lent women a validity to their presence within a particular geographical area or community.

> *"… I don't feel that I'm integrated anywhere really until I've got a job… you are 'Wife of' for so many things when you're new to an area, if you can get a job then you're not 'Wife of' because you're just [Molly] or [Mrs XXXX]… you're there in your own right."* Molly, 40s (NCO, Army)

Some women who were unable to find employment, such as during overseas or short postings, described how this forced them to become dependent on their husband in ways they were not comfortable with. The inability to find work could challenge not only the sense of independence women gained through work but also lead to a perceived loss of status – from worker to 'helper' – within the community.

> *"… [I felt] bored! Frustrated… kinda a bit useless really. I just felt like that women on someone's arm… I like to go and make my own money. I don't like to rely on people and I had to rely on my husband for kind of everything out there."* Mary, 30s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

However, women who assumed the role of military wife by taking part in the military community were able to draw on their experiences to find fulfilling employment. In doing so, women could mitigate the negative effects of accompanied postings on their own employment and well-being and gain a sense of connection, purpose and value by supporting other women in the community.

> *"… the job I currently do now I did… I've done in three different locations. I actually work for the [Army HIVE Information Service][9]… that is probably what really helped me because I was able to use, and I still do today… I use my experience in the Army to help people every day."* Kim, 40s (officer, Army)

c. Mother

Not only were S/Ps required to take on the bulk of childcare responsibilities due to the frequent absences of Service personnel and their irregular military working schedules, the physical distance from family members and close friends meant childcare was often more complicated to arrange. As S/Ps described earlier in this chapter, this could result in difficulties achieving a balance between family responsibilities and the desire to work. This sub-theme was more prominent among S/Ps of officers, but seemed to relate to women discussing their choice in prioritising a family or career rather than to Service personnel rank.

[9] HIVE services provide information on relocation, facilities, schools, further education, housing, healthcare, employment and training to members of the military community, including S/Ps.

For S/Ps who were motivated to work, difficulties balancing work and family life could lead to concerns about whether or not they were fulfilling their responsibilities in being "good" mothers. Balancing a need to return to work for their own well-being against the decision to place their child in childcare was reported to be a source of internal conflict for some S/Ps.

> *"… the difficulty came with that conflict of putting your child in [childcare]… that conflict of probably wanting to… spend more time with your child, but also… for my own needs needing to go back to work."* Anna, 40s (officer, Army)

Some women discussed how they felt pulled between the two competing demands of parenthood and employment, leading to guilt about their abilities as a mother.

> *"...working now, I don't feel like I do my mum bit as well as I did. And I feel guilty about that… I'm conscious that I'm… not 100% there for them… when they're home I want to be at home, but I've got to be working."* Suzy, 40s (officer, Army)

For some S/Ps, the tensions they experienced around motherhood arose from their perceived difficulties with fitting into motherhood in the first place. Carrie struggled with being a stay-at-home mother after serving in the military herself. She did not feel she fitted into this identity and struggled to create relationships with other mothers in the military community because of this. Although she wanted to be a stay at home parent, she described a keen loss of status from not being able to work or fulfil a sense of purpose in her life beyond that of being a mother.

> *"…I found it really difficult because I wasn't a natural mother… I was pretty lonely and I was with women… I found it very difficult to break out… I couldn't work out a way to fulfil my potential… I left the Army … I had a child and suddenly… I was wife of… and had no status whatsoever. So everything went!"* Carrie, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

As discussed previously, not every woman interviewed was interested in a career and some S/Ps who made the choice to stay at home with their children who were not overly concerned by a lack of employment. For these women, their perception of themselves as a mother first and an employee second meant they were content to form their identity around their caring roles rather than as a worker. Some women had already considered the impact that having children would have on their career regardless of who they married and that they had always intended to be a stay at home parent.

"… [children] were always going to interfere with my career… we made a decision when I had our children that I would give up work until they went to secondary school… I'd have probably made that decision anyway… now they're both at school I'm in the same boat as I was before they were born which is I still can't apply to go back in at the level I was in in teaching because I'll move…" Suzy, 40s (officer, Army)

Difficulties in finding work as a result of accompanied postings could provide women with a justification for remaining at home with their children that they felt to be more palatable than simply the desire to be with their children.

"… [when] we've been in the military has been the time when I've had children… from my point of view, it's been quite a release… because of the moving around I've not even thought about the whole 'shall I go back to work' thing… actually I'm glad I've not had to think about it!… I wanted to be at home for [the children] and… [not] worrying about when I was going back to work." Kathleen, 40s (officer, Army)

2.2 Agency

S/Ps faced additional constraints and challenges in seeking or maintaining employment than women in wider society as a result of the restrictions of the military context they lived within. Limitations to the ability of S/Ps to have personal agency in decision-making about their employment or careers meant they described having to make concessions regarding the employment they undertook or relinquish financial independence during periods of unemployment. Such restrictions had implications for job satisfaction, anxiety, stress and resentment among S/Ps. The theme of agency was comprised of three sub-themes: *choice/control*, *concessions* and *financial independence*.

a. Choice/control

A prominent view among S/Ps was that accompanied postings limited the ability of women to have choice and control over their career or employment. For women who were less willing to postpone or adjust their employment to adapt to their military circumstances, the indiscriminate and accidental career choices they have been required to make were reported to negatively influence job satisfaction and generate resentment.

"I've grabbed every opportunity I've been able to, but… there's not really been my conscious choices… [I feel] a little bit resentful because I think we've got into a mode now

where …. I'm working for the money and just keeping in employment, but not really enjoying it too much!" Gina, 40s (NCO, RAF)

A perceived lack of choice or control regarding employment was described by S/Ps as having negative effects on their emotional well-being and mental health. Carrie's struggles to find employment during her husband's time in Service led her to feel that she had no choice or control over her employment and was therefore left without a sense of purpose. This perception was attributed to her on-going depression, an issue she continued to deal with at the time of interview.

"… I desperately wanted to work and I did find a job eventually. But I found myself in a real sort of trench of depression because I just couldn't see where my life was going I suppose." Carrie, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

For some women, perceptions of a loss of control could precede accompanied postings, particularly if women had previous experiences of the realities of accompanied postings. Uncertainty about employment opportunities following accompanied postings left some women feeling worried and nervous about their ability to find work after upcoming postings and the financial repercussion of this for the family.

"…It is quite an unsettling feeling… you've got all the worries of looking and starting all over again really… You try not to get you know sort of stressed about it, but it's just something that happens... you get used to that income a month and then it's like… "When can I start looking?" and "Am I going to get anything?"… I get quite anxious." Allison, 30s (NCO, Army)

The lack of employment choices during accompanied postings did not affect the well-being of all S/Ps equally. Women who knew they were experiencing only a short period of unemployment were better able to deal with the lack of work than those facing a longer period of uncertainty about their employment status. Short postings were described as giving some women a period of grace from looking for employment as they would soon be moving again.

"… 'Oh it's not worth [looking for work] because I'll be moving' so I've not bothered… if you were really determined to you might have been able to get out there and get a job,

but wouldn't be for very long… it was my choice to stay at home so I was quite happy with that." Suzy, 40s (officer, Army)

Following their partners' transition out of Service, S/Ps described being able to regain a sense of control and choice in relation to their career as well as a sense of fulfilment and purpose. The stability families could achieve once they left Service life, including support from their families in the provision of childcare, aided women in regaining steady employment that was previously hindered by accompanied postings. This had positive implications for the well-being of women in terms of providing them with a sense of purpose and value, as well as control not only over the direction of not their career but their wider life.

"… I like routine and I know exactly where things are going. And I feel useful. I feel like you know I can contribute and my life is going somewhere now… I have a career that could go further." Mary, 30s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

b. Concessions

As described previously, although some women were able to maintain a career across accompanied postings, this was not without difficulties. Women discussed the sometimes reluctant 'choices' they had made in order to seek or continue employment in light of the limitations imposed by military life. Such sacrifices had repercussions for S/P perceptions about their ability to fulfil and achieve their potential and could cause resentment and frustration. While discussion of potential was dominated by S/Ps of officer personnel, these women also tended to be those who were eager to maintain or build a career during accompanied postings. Rather than any associations with profession or rank, this difference appeared to be related to their motivations to work.

The concessions S/Ps were required to make during their attempts to maintain or build a career during accompanied postings and the resulting restrictions to their potential were described by many women as difficult to endure. The negative career impacts women described could result in tension between their desire to work and the restrictions they faced from the military context they lived within.

"… in terms of career… there is no career. It is about getting bits and bobs of jobs that I can get. [The upcoming job is] a job a newly qualified person could do… there's lots of compromises really… on a good day I kind of accept that for being in the military and a military wife and on a bad day it, it's more difficult to swallow." Joan, 40s (officer, Army)

Joan used the term “compromises” to describe the career decisions she had made as a result of accompanied postings, although she also described these as the only options available to her in order to continue working while moving alongside her husband. The sacrifices Joan described and her perceived underemployment according to her skills and experience left her feeling undervalued and frustrated with the sacrifices she had made to her career.

> *“… it does feel like a bit of a kick in the teeth having [a job] that effectively I could have done ten years ago… it just feels that you’ve sacrificed, sacrifice an awful lot really...”* Joan, 40s (officer, Army)

The frustrations S/Ps expressed with military life were not just limited to employment. Women trying to gain qualifications to improve their employment opportunities described the difficulties they faced in doing so. The barriers they experienced in trying to achieve their potential, and the concessions they had made in abandoning this goal, resulted in frustration towards the perceived failure of the military in supporting the careers of S/Ps.

> *“…Very frustrated at times. Very frustrated, feeling like the inner flexibility, if you know what I mean, with the Army and where he could be posted meant that I couldn’t achieve something for me. And at that time it meant a lot to me.”* Kim, 40s (officer, Army)

The concessions S/Ps were required to make could be more difficult to cope with where women had to balance these concessions against their resistance to the identity of a military wife. Women who wanted more in terms of their career described feeling secondary to their husband’s career, and therefore secondary to her husband within the eyes of her family members.

> *“… [my mother-in-law said] “you know [your husband]’s job's the most important thing and you should just put up with that”. And that made me quite angry because well why is his job the most important? Why should his job be the most important thing?”* Gina, 40s (NCO, RAF)

The perception among S/Ps that their career was secondary to their husband’s was also reflected in Carrie’s frustration, and ultimate resignation, with giving up her career when they decided to start a family.

"…it was just something I accepted… I was a bit bitter and cross and probably still am… my husband being the primary worker … I wish it could have been the other way around, but there's no way we could have done that. So that's what happened." Carrie, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

Most S/Ps were able to use the transition process out of Service to settle and build their own career after years of supporting and conceding to their husband's. However, the issues S/Ps experienced with employment could continue long after they leave the military community as a result of ongoing or anticipated caring responsibilities and a perceived inability to gain skills or experience.

"…when [my children] come home for holidays I feel I want to be there for them. So therefore I still can't go for a sort of a highflying job or even train myself for a highflying job. I could train for it, but I'm a bit old I think! So whilst my husband has gone into a very good job, I'm left floundering… and I have elderly parents… I still can't fulfil my potential in any way." Carrie, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

Carrie explained that while her husband had found a good job after leaving service, the importance of meeting her perceived obligations as a mother and a daughter was in conflict with her desire to pursue a career. The concessions she continued to make to her career in favour of these responsibilities were described as preventing her from achieving a sense of purpose or achievement, contributing to her current state of depression and poor well-being.

c. Financial independence

Women described how the loss of employment meant relinquishing their income and relying on their husband for money. For some, this was a minor issue that was resolved once they found work. For others, having access to their own money was described as important not just for a sense of ownership and achievement but for maintaining a sense of independence.

"I like to go and make my own money. I don't like to rely on people… [I worked] so that I could… I'd just have my bit of money. It was mine that I'd earnt and just to have something for myself really. I didn't really have anything for myself." Mary, 30s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

As all the women had worked prior to getting married and having children, this adjustment could be difficult to accept, particularly women who were used to being employed or where their income provided a sense of purpose and value.

2.3 Self-confidence

The positive or negative employment experiences S/Ps had during accompanied postings could affect how they came to view themselves in terms of a positive or negative *self-worth.* While distinct from other themes, this theme was not apparent in all transcripts and the findings were therefore somewhat sparse. S/Ps of officers were the only participants to discuss this theme.

The search for work after taking time out to raise children could be an anxious and nervous time for S/Ps, reducing their confidence in their skills and experiences. Although professionally qualified, the return to employment was reported to be a time of self-doubt for women about their abilities.

> *"…when I went back to work after eleven years out of the workplace it was quite daunting in terms of my confidence. Even though I had the academic ability on paper it didn't feel like it. And even though I know I had a brain, it didn't feel like it inside."* Suzy, 40s (officer, Army)

However, once secured, women described how employment could increase self-esteem, providing validation and acknowledgement of their value as a person outside the home and their roles as wife or mother.

> *"… when you're in work quite often people say "Thank you". I know that['s]… going to sound really daft, but that can make you feel so much better about yourself… if you're unable to do that I think your self-esteem can be knocked quite quickly."* Kim, 40s (officer, Army)

Despite the challenges S/Ps face in pursuing careers during accompanied postings, some women felt they benefited personally from the barriers they had overcome in finding employment and that in overcoming them, they had become more confident in their abilities as well as in themselves.

"… [moving] … has actually made me a in some respects a stronger person, a more independent person… it can also help you be more focussed… on what you do... sometimes you have to look outside the barriers … and work around it. So that can make you stronger." Kim, 40s (officer, Army)

2.4 Connectedness

Another benefit employment provided to the well-being of S/Ps was in providing a social outlet by connecting women to social networks unrelated to their connection to the military community or to their identity as a mother. S/Ps described how the support they obtained from colleagues acted as an important buffer against poor mental health and well-being, preventing boredom and loneliness.

As described previously, the social aspects of employment could benefit women by allowing them to create an independent self that was separate from their identity as a mother and wife. In addition, employment provided a means of engaging with other adults socially outside of the social contact centred on their husband or children and helped women to establish a sense of community and commonality with other people which may not have existed in the military community.

"And also it's quite nice to be able to talk to other adults as well. I think I'd go insane if I just stayed at home all the time!" Jennifer, 30s (officer, Army)

"…for me in terms of mental health, working does… has been of great benefit in terms of it allows you to get to know people even… after a move. And it gives you the shared experience…" Anna, 40s (officer, Army)

Women discussed how employment prevented isolation on some postings, with employment providing a means for S/Ps who were more reserved to meet people outside the community.

"…luckily for me I got a job!… if I didn't get that job, I'd, I'd have just been… in that flat… Oh I'd have been terrible… I really would have been fed up." Janet, 40s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

Summary

This section described S/Ps experiences of accompanied postings in relation to employment. Women discussed the impact of accompanied postings on their careers and employment, the

perceived facilitators and barriers to employment, the effects of changes to their employment on family finances and how these changed following transition out of Service. The influence of these experiences on well-being was described.

Employment performed a number of important roles for S/Ps during accompanied postings, providing a social outlet and means of connecting with other people, and contributing to a sense of personal identity separate to their roles as military wives and mothers. However, for many women employment was difficult to find and maintain due to the short term nature of accompanied postings and the disruptions of frequent moves. Volunteering seemed to be a route back into work for only a small number of women; these activities were described only by S/Ps of officers. Many S/Ps described tensions between balancing their role as a worker with not only that of being a mother but with being a wife within the restrictions of the military community. For some women, these tensions led to feelings of anxiety, stress and guilt and a perceived loss of status and potential. While some S/Ps who were happy to be stay at home mothers described less of an impact of unemployment on their well-being, S/Ps with a strong desire to work or who associated employment with their status or value (either through the independent identity obtained from working or sense of purpose work afforded them), found these tensions harder to balance.

Spouses/partners experiences of the military institution and the influences on well-being

This section describes spouses and partners (S/Ps) experiences of the military institution via the distal policies and procedures that resulted in accompanied postings and gendered expectations from within the community to perform particular roles according to the rank and position of their husband. Encounter with military representatives and perceptions of military support during and after Service were also discussed. The section concludes by exploring the influence of these experiences on S/P well-being.

1. S/Ps experiences of the military institution

1.1 Encounters with the military

a. Accompanied postings

All S/Ps had encountered the military through the imposition of accompanied postings on their family. Most women described overall positive experiences for themselves and their families as a result of these moves, including the opportunity to meet new people and experience new activities and locations (Table 43, Appendix 4.2).

> *"…we've skied, we drove over to [North America]… without the Army we wouldn't have had them opportunities…they've given us an excellent life… they've given us some fantastic opportunities and I'm thankful for that."* Janet, 40s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

Others reported more mixed or negative experiences of accompanied postings due to their frequency and the disruptions these could cause for families, particularly when accompanied postings were overseas. Where Service personnel received sudden or short notice changes to postings, women described disruptions to their plans and expectations.

> *"…trying to sort out all your bills and furniture and what you're taking and what you can't take… within the UK its fine… you['re] usually sorted out within a couple of days… moving [overseas], it was like three months before our stuff had to go so we had to then rent [furniture]. "* Dee, 30s (NCO, Army)

> *"…[the posting] suddenly changed at the last minute… we thought everything was lined up in terms of our house and then suddenly you have… quite [a] short time to find*

somewhere to live or to kind of apply for accommodation and things." Kathleen, 40s (officer, Army)

Some women described how having children added extra complications to the logistics of moving due to accompanied postings. School places needed to be found prior to moving but delays to postings could cause problems in completing the required paperwork and uncertainty around school places.

"… you have to wait for the paperwork to come through… Because you have had an address to be able to apply to schools and you don't know sometimes the date when you're going to be moving." Jennifer, 30s (officer, Army)

Adaptation to accompanied postings varied between women. Some women explained that they had become accustomed or resigned to the frequency of moves as they experienced more of them. Others described the moves as difficult to adapt to and required a period of adjustment prior to and, and following, each accompanied posting in order to emotionally prepare and settle in.

"… you adjust quicker… there's a bit of an 'Oh here we go again' kind of feeling… but I think you do… become focussed on what… it is that, you know, need[s] to [be done]… once you knew you were being posted I'm like "Where is it we're going?" Right and thinking ahead…" Kim, 40s (officer, Army)

"…I always kind of say it takes you know six months to get used to it, a year to kind of live it and then for the last six months you're getting ready to go again." Joan, 40s (officer, Army)

b. Expected roles of S/Ps

Expectations to perform a number of informal, unpaid positions within the community as a result of their husband's position in the military hierarchy were commonly described by S/Ps of Service personnel of high-ranking officers. These roles centred on organising social events and supporting other families and were more prominent if postings were overseas or where Service personnel held a position of command.

"… when your husbands in command, you are expected to be visible as the commanding officer's wife. You're meant to take a lead particularly if it coincides with a tour… you're

not meant to be the welfare officer, but you are meant to just be a little bit of a figurehead…" Anna, 40s (officer, Army)

Such expectations were not described by all S/Ps of officer ranked personnel. For some, the expectations they encountered were limited to minor roles such as attending evening events with their husband. Other women reported no such roles.

"… not once was I ever expected to be anywhere because I was [officer]'s wife… my husband was [Commanding Officer of TA regiment] which meant that I had to go to the evening stuff. But I didn't have any family responsibilities ever for which I was eternally grateful!" Carrie, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

"… fortunately there was no pressure on me at all which is probably just as well! [I'm] not very good at that kind of thing." Louise, 30s (officer, RAF, transitioned)

For other women, the expected roles and associated activities were reported to provide a distraction during times of forced unemployment.

"…I got a lot more involved in… the running of the regiment [overseas]. I was the chair of the local SSAFA group and I got involved in the wives' club... children's' activity group… that was probably because we were in [Europe] and I couldn't work … I kind of threw myself into those things..." Joan, 40s (officer, Army)

While some level of expectation to perform roles did exist within the military community, women also described how attitudes were changing and there was no longer the same level of social pressure to be as involved in these roles as in the past.

"…times are certainly changing… whilst it used to be that the [officer –high ranking]'s wife was expected to do lots… it's different now… gone are the days where… it's frowned upon if [an officer's wife is] not a present and active member…" Joan, 40s (officer, Army)

c. Engaging with the military

Experiences of engaging with the military institution via its representatives were described by women as varying depending on welfare staff, the policies of different commanding officers and tensions with the aims of the military (Table 43, Appendix 4.2). Some women described minor negative encounters, such as being prevented from opening a bank account without

their husband present. Others reported more serious incidents that, although not commonly discussed by participants, were important enough to be discussed at some length by the women involved.

One woman described discussing her experience of trying to find employment within the military system and being told by a Welfare Officer that Army wives should be excluded early on in the recruitment process as they will move because of accompanied postings.

> *"…they don't want Army wives basically I think, is what he's saying. Because they're a risk because they can get posted… surely the best person for the job, regardless of if they're forces or not, is the person that's got the knowledge and the experience!"* Molly, 40s (NCO, Army)

Another woman discussed a long and protracted community dispute with military command over the decision to close community facilities used by families without consultation and the tensions this exposed between military and civilians standards.

> *"… they'd made a duff decision [to close facility] or they hadn't gone about the decision in the way that civilian organisations would have to and yet they think they don't have to operate like civilian organisations… when they're dealing with wives, they're dealing with people who expect civilian standards."* Toni, 40s (officer, RAF)

1.2 Perceptions of military institutional support

Despite concerns about expected roles and their place within it, many women welcomed the community the military created for families. Daily support was considered by many S/Ps to be lacking, however not all women wanted or expected support from military welfare or associated services. Support for S/Ps during transition was also described as lacking.

a. During Service

The presence of a community created and maintained by the military through activities and events for S/Ps and families was anticipated as a benefit of military life by many women. Women who perceived the community to be absent in their current location were disappointed by the lack of social events, especially if they had become accustomed to these in other postings (Table 43, Appendix 4.2).

"… [overseas] there was a lot more things you know… Sunday dinners for you, parties for the children with waterslides… the mess was a lot better. There was a lot more functions going on and there just doesn't seem to be any of that back here." Dee, 30s (NCO, Army)

"… they have regular socials for [sergeant rank and above]… mess dos and things. If your husband is below that rank, there is not an awful lot there in terms of getting people together for socialising." Courtney, 30s (NCO, RAF)

Some S/Ps expressed appreciation of the practical and emotional support provided by the military for families during Service, in particular during times of crisis such as family illness or bereavement. However, the provision of general daily support was perceived to be lacking.

"…when I had the post-natal depression, they were very good with that. That support service worked really well. And I think they probably worked quite well on their compassionate things… your everyday day-to-day support, there isn't really any…" Gina, 40s (NCO, RAF)

A prominent view among women was that, beyond compassionate circumstances, the military did not provide good practical or emotional support for families outside of times of deployment and was more concerned with the well-being of Service personnel.

"… I would say the Army doesn't support wives at all actually!… I don't think the Army supports them… on one hand they say we need you wives and we need you to support your husbands and the next they give you horrible quarters and move you around… you're really just there because of your husband." Carrie, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

"…when those husbands go away [on deployment] … there's a lot of reaching out to wives cause I suppose because they're all on their own... in between that… there's not an awful lot on offer…" Courtney, 30s (NCO, RAF)

While S/Ps reported being aware of the military services available for families, not all were willing to access support from the military. Some women described themselves as self-reliant and able to cope with any issues or had other systems of support they were able to rely on.

"… [support is] there if you want it. Yeah it's just whether you want to take them up on it really… I suppose I've never really had to." Molly, 40s (NCO, Army)

"…I've not relied on kind of the military network as it were, you know like the Hive and Army Welfare… I've not used it at all. Mainly I suppose because of the church side of things… also within the UK you know it's fairly easy to find your local supermarket… that sort of thing doesn't change." Kathleen, 40s (officer, Army)

Other women were concerned about the quality of support provision, expressing a lack of trust in the ability of welfare staff to understand the needs of families and provide appropriate welfare services.

"… [welfare officer]'s just in the wrong job… [they're] too military and [don't] have any qualifications in community work or housing or anything beyond the military… [the military] employ[s] people with limited real world experience to deal with families. And families live in the real world!" Toni, 40s (officer, RAF)

Whether women chose to seek help from military sources may be affected by their perceptions of the type of support available and whether it was deemed to be appropriate for them. For S/Ps of officers, the perception that military services focused on practical rather than emotional issues may mean this group were less likely to seek support from such organisations.

"…an officer's wife might think 'Well I can run my affairs very well so I don't need that support. I'm not likely to get into debt. I'm not likely to have more of the obvious difficulties that other people might have.'… I do think that officer's wives would feel a little bit uncomfortable about accessing some of those services… I think it is going to be more emotional." Anna, 40s (officer, Army)

b. Transition

Women reported that military support during transition was lacking, especially where families were no longer living in Service accommodation (Table 43, Appendix 4.2). Information about procedure and available services during this time was passed through Service personnel and did not always reach S/Ps. There was also a perceived lack of appreciation from the military for the support women had provided to the community during their husband's Service.

"You'd have to ask my husband that one because I didn't get any advice!… we were living out of married quarters by then… [it] all went… through my husband." Louise, 30s (officer, RAF, transitioned)

"One thing that was obvious was that leaving the Service was nothing to do with me. My husband did all the farewells, all the dinners and everything else. The wives are not thanked in any way. And there was certainly no support. It was just like another move" Carrie, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

Many S/Ps described going through a process of 'phased' transition, with families settling in one area while personnel completed the remainder of his Service. This allowed women to merge back into civilian society, creating social networks and accessing support within their local community. Under such circumstances, S/Ps did not perceive military support to be necessary given their physical and social distance from the military.

"…we were kind of let out of the Army gradually. I went first, he occasionally said "Oh there's a dinner… do you want to come?"… it was quite a drawn-out process for me. I gradually faded away from military life." Kristen, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

"… we were already out… my mentality was out by then… we lived in our own house… we'd already started a separate life… I'd already made that separation I suppose, you know, years before he actually left. So I don't think there was anything they could have done to help me." Louise, 30s (officer, Army, transitioned)

2. The influence of S/P experiences of the military institution on well-being

Three main themes were identified from the data exploring how S/P well-being was affected by their interactions with the military institution (Figure 21 (Table 44, Appendix 4.2));

- challenges to S/P **identity** due to women *assuming the rank* of their husband within the military community and military policies and procedures assigning the identity of *military wife*
- limitations to S/P personal **agency** due to a perceived lack of *choice/control* over their life and the *concessions* made in order to negotiate the restrictions of military life
- S/P **connectedness** to the community created and maintained by the military institution in tension with *disconnection*

2.1 Identity

S/Ps described their incorporation into the rank and identity of the Service personnel they were in a relationship via social pressures to assume particular roles and behaviours within the community. In addition, the identity of women as a military wife was defined and limited by the relationship S/Ps had with the military institution and its' representatives. While some S/Ps described experiencing no negative influences on their well-being because of these identities, others resisted their imposition because of concerns about how this may affect their relationships with other S/Ps or experienced anxieties about expected roles. Encounters with the military could influence the value women saw themselves as having to the institution and their role within the community. This theme was comprised of two subthemes: *assuming rank* and *military wife*.

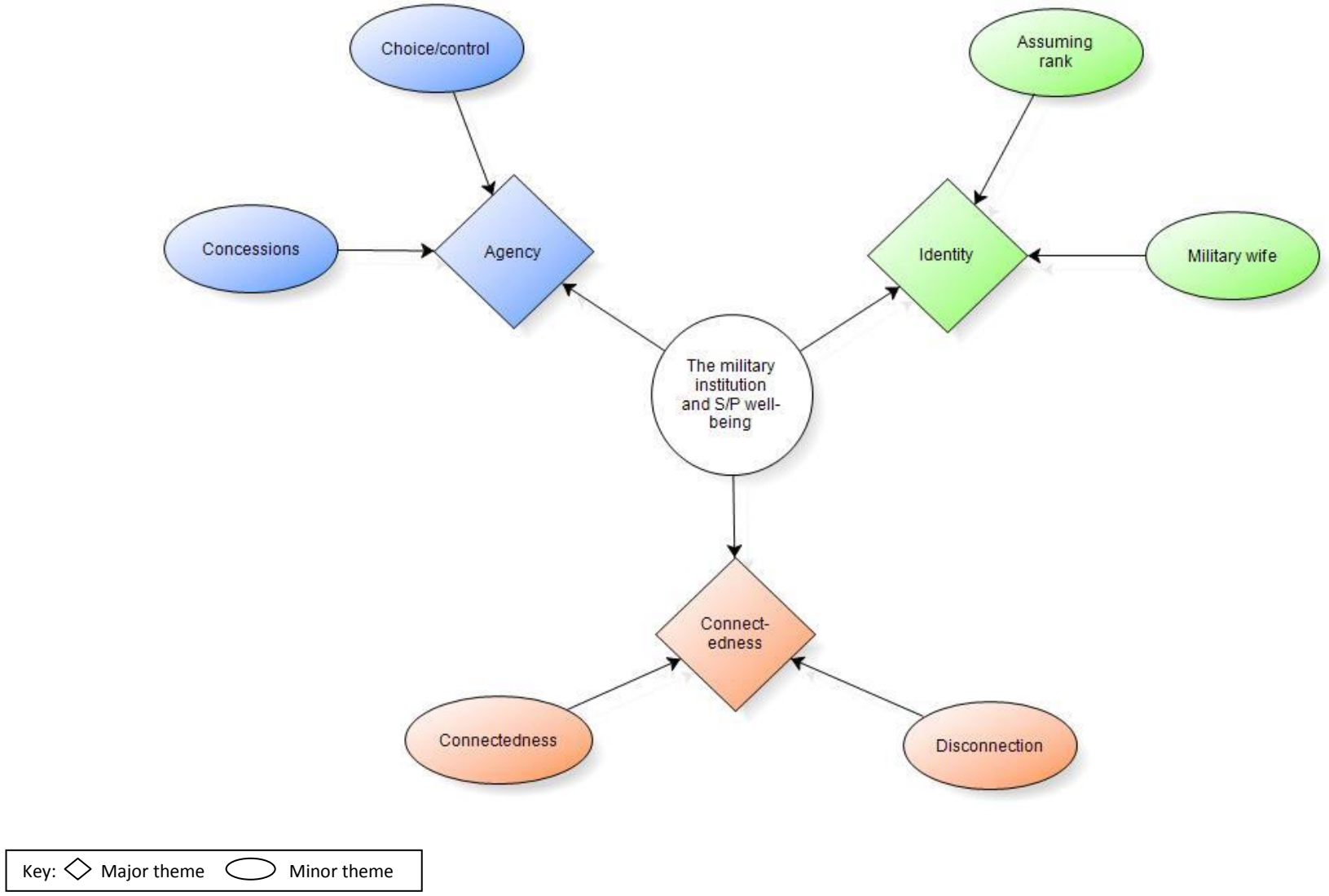
a. Assuming rank

Through the expectations on women to perform informal, unpaid roles within the community on their husband's behalf, S/Ps described how they became incorporated into their husband's job. Women explained how through this process, they became "ranked", with a similar standing to Service personnel and an assigned position within the military community. S/P perspectives on these expectations and on their assigned position within this hierarchy differed according to the circumstances and motivations of individual women and therefore had different influences on well-being.

Some S/Ps were happy to undertake these roles within the community. There were benefits to well-being where such roles acted as a distraction or gave women purpose during times where they were unable to work such as when they were overseas. Because of their social nature, the roles could also aid women in building social connections in the community.

> *"… there were no options for working in [North America] at [XXXX]… so I did voluntary work with what they called the Welcome Wagon!… [it was] just going to welcome [new families] and explaining a few basics… I loved it. I met a lot of nice people..."* Kristen, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

Figure 21: Thematic diagram of the influence of S/P experiences of the military institution on well-being



Other S/Ps reported experiencing social pressure to accept and perform informal, unpaid roles within the community that were associated with their husband's rank and position. While women undertook these roles, some were uncertain about their participation in what they perceived to be the replication of the rank system within the military community amid concerns of how this may affect their relationships with other S/Ps within the community.

> *"We did it! But under pressure... because we were the Officers' wives they thought that we should be leading them… [we] certainly didn't feel like we could force ourselves on the soldiers' wives because of … what job our husbands had… we didn't feel it was appropriate or why should we have to do it just because we're an officer's wife… it was a bit 'Well we'll have to do it because they're expecting us to do it'… you're conscious that the soldiers' wives are probably looking at you and thinking 'Well, who does she think she is?'"* Suzy, 40s (officer, Army)

Some women discussed the tensions they felt between volunteering for these roles and expectations to accept them because of their husband's position within the community. The gendered nature of the roles they were expected to perform and the inherent caring responsibilities within them were also described.

> *"…I took it on myself to… look after the other wives, you know, by arranging meals and get togethers… I kind of fell into it. I think I felt that because of [husband]'s rank that I had to… it was kind of an expectation that I should do it really as the [NCO's] wife… the other women kind of look to you maybe because of your experiences and who your husband is..."* Mary, 30s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

Some women described anxiety and nervousness about performing roles they did not feel were suited to their personalities and that they were unlikely to have performed if they were not overseas. The reluctance of women to undertake these roles stemmed not only from a perceived lack of self-confidence in successfully living up to the expectations of other S/Ps and community members but also from an unwillingness to be a focal point in the community because of who their husband was.

> *"… there's part of me that felt a little bit daunted by it, I've never done anything like that before. There's also part of me that doesn't like to be in the spotlight… I was a little, little scared. You know there is that kind of 'Oh my God! Will I do a good job like she did?"* Joan**,** 40s (officer, Army)

The timing of expectations to perform social roles was described as important for the well-being of women. In her first posting, Anna was a new mother who experienced an accompanied posting to an area without social support and her husband, the commanding officer, was deployed. Because of his position in the community, Anna experienced strong expectations to provide support for other officer wives while at the same time describing a lack of reciprocal support from other S/Ps as a result of her husband's rank and not previously moving with the regiment. These additional demands during a time of great vulnerability, coupled with a perceived lack of support from the community, resulted in this posting being a time of great emotional stress for Anna.

> *" when [I was] feeling at my very, very lowest ebb… that was when I was the CO's wife!… being absolutely at the lowest point inside, but then having this… outer image of… being there for everyone else."* Anna, 40s (officer, Army)

b. Military wife

As well as assuming the rank and position of their husband, S/Ps described how the policies and procedures of the military led to them being assigned the identity of military wife and defined within institutional spaces and processes through their relationship with their husband. Primarily, this identity mediated the relationship S/Ps have with the military as an institution through their encounters with institutional representatives such as welfare and housing officers during accompanied postings. S/Ps encountered different Service personnel in charge of services for families in each new location, with differing levels of experience in assisting families, altering the relationship women have with the military from posting to posting. How women viewed these encounters as validating or dismissing their presence could affect the perceived value S/Ps felt they had within the military community and led some women to women resisted the imposition of this identity.

Whether S/Ps described themselves as military was important in how they negotiated their relationship with the military institution. Some S/Ps were extremely resistant to the imposition of this identity and did not consider themselves as part of the "military" in any respect because of a strong sense of self or an independent identity.

> *"… I'm not military in any way, shape or form… even on the patch that we're on now, I think of myself as civilian even though my husband is military…"* Kathleen, 40s (officer, Army)

Some women, particularly those who derived much of their sense of identity from their career, tried to restrict their participation as a military wife within the community in favour of living a largely civilian life.

> *"I just see myself as married to someone who is in the Army… I think there have been times when… I can't avoid the role… of being an Army wife. But I try and keep that to a minimum and I try… live a civilian life as much as possible!"* Anna, 40s (officer, Army)

For some women, their perceptions of their experiences with representatives of the military or military procedures reminded them of their status as a dependent, rather than as a full and valued member of the military community. Although not commonly discussed by women, these negative encounters encouraged a sense of 'otherness' and separation from the military. For women who were already questioning their status and value within the military community, these experiences reinforced their belief that they had lost some of their identity on becoming a military wife.

> *"[discussing an interaction with a housing officer] …it was breath-taking, I just thought I can't believe people speak to people like this! … there is this attitude which permeates especially out here at camp that is really you're not your own person. You're wife of… even the title dependent … it's fairly derogatory really in my opinion. UK dependent is what you're called!"* Gina, 40s (NCO, RAF)

Such marginalisation or expressions of power and exclusion by the military via its representatives were experienced by women in more explicit ways as well. During her involvement in a campaign to prevent the closure of a community facility, one S/P explained how her involvement led to her husband, and the husbands of other women involved, being reprimanded by their commanding officer.

> *"… I feel constrained in what I can say and do because there are people of the mind-set in the military that if your wife doesn't behave and stay in line in the way they think they should, their husband's career will suffer… surely there's no other organisation that behaves like that."* Toni, 40s (officer, RAF)

Although acknowledged as a rare occurrence, this paternalistic approach and the threat of sanction inherent within it, led her to deliberately modify and restrict her behaviour to align with what she felt the military valued in the wife of an officer of the Armed Forces.

2.2 Agency

Women described how the nature of military life and the military's focus on operational effectiveness constrained their ability to govern and plan their lives and the compromises they had been required to make. Such experiences resulted in conflict between the military and the family, resentment towards the institution, and questions about the role permitted to S/Ps within the military community. This theme was formed of two sub-themes: *choice/control* and *concessions.*

a. Choice/control

Through accompanied postings, the military institution was described as exerting control over the lives of military families in its pursuit of operational effectiveness. Women reported how the decisions taken by the military had the potential to conflict with the choices of S/Ps and families and restrict or limit the ability of S/Ps to make independent decisions regarding aspects of family life.

While accompanied postings could be a source of enjoyment and adventure for some women, others described the stress and disruption that arose from relinquishing decisions regarding location to the control of military.

> *"… there have been times when its… a little bit sort of stressful. It's just not being in control of the planning really. "Oh by the way you're going to move to such and such an area" where you've got no control at all being told where you're going to move to, and not having a choice. That I think is one of the hardest things."* Gina, 40s (NCO, RAF)

Adapting to a lack of choice regarding accompanied postings did not necessarily become easier with increased experience. Difficulty in adjusting to the frequent displacement of postings was reported to contribute to a sense of instability and uncertainty.

> *"… you get settled in your way of life, like you know we've been here over three years and you know you go along and you're doing your thing and then its "Ok no you're off again!" It's really, it's hard!"* Allison, 30s (NCO, Army)

Some women discussed the worries and concerns they had prior to each move that resulted from the uncertainties of accompanied postings. How women chose to make meaning from this could mitigate how they came to cope with the moves and their perceived lack of control.

"… if [husband] was talking to you, he would say that for me the first six months we have the same conversations about how I hate it and "I don't like it!" and "I'm not going to make any friends!"… at some point you just have to kind of make it work because it's your life and you don't have a choice really." Joan, 40s (officer, Army)

The barriers to employment S/Ps faced as a result of accompanied postings, as described in the previous section (p253), and a perceived lack of support in helping women overcome these could cause women to harbour negative attitudes towards the military.

"… the Army'll say oh you know "A happy wife, a happy soldier… happy wife"! And it's not like that at all, is it? No, it's not... it's not like that all! Family comes very, very, very low down on the priorities list." Molly, 40s (NCO, Army)

Other women described resentment towards the military that arose not only from restrictions on employment but from perceptions of what was considered to be a "good" military wife.

"… [I feel] a little bit resentful [towards] the Air Force… [the] lack of opportunity and there is, I think, a very age-old attitude which is outdated really about what a spouse should be doing… There's an overwhelming amount of people that don't work and appear resigned… I wouldn't say happy with it, but… they think their job has actually been the military spouse rather than anything else." Gina, 40s (NCO, RAF)

The lack of choice and control S/Ps described extended beyond that of accompanied postings to deeper concerns about the rights of families within the military communities they moved between. One woman described the perceived powerlessness she felt to resist decisions made by the military chain of command that encroached into what she viewed as personal family space. She described a meeting to resolve issues in the community that only uniformed personnel were allowed to attend.

"… [the military] can take a decision I don't like and I've just got to suck it up! … they're taking decisions in my home that affect my children … that they're not entitled to take, but I'm supposed to just accept that… you're just expected to just let your husband talk for you. And we did and you know it was fine… the fact that I wasn't allowed a voice. Yes I'm angry about that… it's not on!" Toni, 40s (officer, RAF)

For Toni, her exclusion and treatment as "other" by military representatives acting as gatekeepers to the spaces and processes of the military, contributed to her perceptions of marginalisation and disempowerment within the community. Although such extreme experiences were not common among the women interviewed, they had serious implications for how women felt about the institution and about their place within the community.

b. Concessions

While a perceived lack of choice and control was discussed by many S/Ps, one participant went further to elaborate on the wider concessions she had made to her life in order to fit around the restrictions and limited choices of military life. Joan used the word "compromises" to describe the not only the concessions she had made to her career but those she had made to her life in general during her time as a S/P, including housing and frequent accompanied postings.

> *"…you get very tired of being in military accommodation where the kitchens look like something from the 1940s and the cupboards don't work and the house is falling apart… being told you're going to live somewhere where you don't particularly want to go and live, in an area that you don't want to be… there's a whole host of compromises there… as you get older and you've been in the system for … a longer period of time I think they become harder to… harder to cope with..."* Joan, 40s (officer, Army)

Joan described how she was finding it increasingly difficult to emotionally cope with the sacrifices and losses she experienced and that each posting came to reflect her unresolved frustrations with military life.

> *"The start of a new posting, for me, I find particularly difficult… it brings to the fore all of the compromises I've made and the moving on … it takes you straight back into that 'Oh My God! Here we go again!'… it brings up all of those issues of compromise and the things that I personally have let go of."* Joan, 40s (officer, Army)

2.3 Connectedness

Despite concerns among women about issues of identity and agency, the informal, unpaid roles they performed were described as contributing to a perceived sense of connectedness to the military community. S/Ps who were unable to access this community described feelings of isolation and disconnection. This theme was comprised of two sub-themes; *connectedness* and *disconnection*.

a. Connectedness

The roles S/Ps performed within the military community were described as helping create a strong and active community, enabling women to establish reciprocal networks of support and understanding. Given the expectations for S/Ps of officers to take leading roles in arranging such events and activities because of their husband's rank, this group was more likely to discuss this theme.

Participation in social events within the community was described as a source of enjoyment for some S/Ps. Women explained how contributing to the community contributed to their sense of belonging and connection to the community, benefiting themselves and their families.

> *"… it was fairly obvious that, you know, if you do lots of really good things and it was lots of fun and I think on the whole [of] the regiment really benefitted from it… I was part of that community and so you know me, my kids, my family all benefitted from it."* Joan, 40s (officer, Army)

Some women discussed how their personality and experience of military life meant they were happy to perform roles in support of their husband while overseas. The gendered expectations of the roles women undertook was highlighted by the maternal descriptions of creating a supportive, surrogate military 'family' for other S/Ps who were away from loved ones for perhaps the first time.

> *"… I am sociable and I like doing those sorts of things and I can see the value of helping families [overseas] … especially the junior soldier's wives you know it was quite difficult for them being away from their mums, their mums and their families … I'm happy to create some sort of regimental family."* Kristen, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

Despite the connectedness the roles women performed could generate, some S/Ps described their concerns that their personal information might be knowingly or unknowingly shared within the community. Such perceptions could prevent women from seeking support from the military services.

> *"… the trouble is it's such a close-knit community… its hard living in a community, working in the community… because nothing's ever private, there's always a worry whatever you say is going to get back to somebody."* Gina, 40s (NCO, RAF)

Other women reported how the distrust they felt towards the military as a result of their negative experiences with welfare or command prevented them from seeking help from military services.

> *"… I wouldn't go to my husband's employer for support partly because I don't trust confidentiality. I don't trust them at all actually!... I've reached a point now where I don't trust the RAF at all! And I wouldn't go to them for help with anything actually!"* Toni, 40s (officer, RAF)

b. Disconnection

Perceived exclusion from military support was described as leading to a sense of isolation and disconnection from the community among some S/Ps. This was particularly true if women were living off base or in unaccompanied postings.

Some women explained how their family was housed off base due a lack of appropriate military housing following accompanied postings. This was described as creating a perceived physical and social barrier between women and the military community, with one S/P describing how this distance "*instantly [made her] feel slightly alienated"* from those living on base [Molly, 40s (NCO, Army, 40s). Other women explained how the distance made them feel they were in a form of no-man's land; neither completely civilian due to their relationship with their husband in Service nor completely military due to the lack of inclusion and support from the military community.

> *"… [the current posting is] kind of the worst of both worlds really. You're not in a military community… the military community is, you know, forty-five minutes away … I'm sure that actually there's a very strong community there, but I'm not part of it… there's actually no support there to help be part of that…"* Joan, 40s (officer, Army)

Similar perceptions of disconnection were reported by S/Ps who declined to move with their husband. However, the decision to leave the community and return home meant women felt excluded and disconnected from the community that may have understood their situation. As a "military wife"

> *"… you can very much then end up feeling very much… feeling isolated from the regiment because you're not there and like than there's deployments and there's lots of activities*

and things going on. If you're married unaccompanied you're not part of that." Kim, 40s (officer, Army)

Summary

This section described S/P experiences of the military institution. Women described their experiences of accompanied postings and the expectations to perform informal, unpaid responsibilities within the military community, their perceptions of military support during accompanied postings and transition and their encounters with representatives of the military. The influences of these experiences on well-being were discussed.

Women explained how fulfilling social expectations to perform informal, unpaid roles incorporated them into their husband's job and assigned them a similar rank within the military community. The encounters women had with representatives of the military were described as influencing how women came to view their place and value within the military community. Institutional practices and policies bonding S/Ps with their husband in everyday military life challenged the independent identity of women and constrained their ability to plan and control their lives. Women described the concessions they were required to make in order to continue moving alongside their husband. Although there were concerns about these expected roles, performing them was reported to help create a sense of connectedness and community between S/Ps. Women who were housed at a distance from military bases or on unaccompanied postings explained how they felt isolated and disconnected from the community.

Spouses/partners experiences of family relations during accompanied postings and the influence on well-being partners

This section begins by describing spouses and partners (S/Ps) experiences of family relations during accompanied postings and the transition out of Service, including the effect on their relationships with their husband and wider family and how children manage accompanied postings. The effects of these experiences on S/P well-being were then explored.

1. S/Ps experiences of family relations during accompanied postings

1.1 Effects on relationship between S/Ps and their husband

Accompanied postings were described as a potentially challenging time for military couples, contributing to minor relationship tensions or leading to more serious problems related to the wider implications of moving (Table 45, Appendix 4.3). However, some women explained that accompanied postings helped create stronger, more united relationships if negotiated as a family and if strong lines of communication were maintained between S/Ps and Service personnel. Unaccompanied postings and transition were described as times of additional relationship stress as women adapted to the absence or presence of their husband.

Descriptions of relationship problems resulting from accompanied postings were common among S/Ps of both officer and non-officer ranks. These ranged from minor issues and tension around the logistics of moving to more long term negative effects on relationship quality. Uncertainties and worries about the logistics of upcoming accompanied postings were reported to cause relationship tensions, although these were largely resolved once families settled into their new posting.

> *"…I'll be worrying about moving [child] and worrying about having to leave my job… you know what's the quarter going to be like? Is it going to be a nice area? Are we going to like it?… you can get a bit stressed at times I'm sure and bite each other's heads off!"* Allison, 30s (NCO, Army)

> *"…[my husband is] not the one that sort of sods off every time there's a move… he's pretty hands on… it was very much a team thing although it was always slightly fractious cause you'd be tired…"* Carrie, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

Other women described more serious relationship issues as a result of accompanied postings. Leaving family and friends could negatively impact on relationships if women were reluctant to move away from their social networks.

> *"… I didn't want to go to [Europe]… to the point where we maybe could have split up…"* Mary, 40s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

Not all women reported problems in their relationship as a result of accompanied postings. Some S/Ps, more commonly women in a relationship with officers, reported no impact from accompanied postings while others described positive effects. Repeated accompanied postings could benefit relationships, either by providing an opportunity for partners to become accustomed to the other's coping style or highlighting the strength and support present within the relationship.

> *"…with each one, we're learning… we learn and so you know each time you recognise the signs [of any problems] sooner and you talk about it sooner and then you can put it right sooner."* Kathleen, 40s (officer, Army)

> *"…I think sometimes moving… shows the cracks in a relationship maybe or it… makes you realise that… you're quite a solid couple… it makes you rely on each other a little bit I think and for us that's… [been] a good thing."* Anna, 40s (officer, Army)

1.2 Effects on children

Descriptions of the effect of accompanied postings on the children of Service personnel varied according to children's ages and personalities, with older children perceived to be more affected (Table 46, Appendix 4.3). Reported problems related to how children adjusted socially following accompanied postings and concerns about academic achievement and accessing school places. Many military families, usually those of officer personnel, opted to send their children to boarding school as a result of these problems.

Social issues were the most commonly discussed impacts of accompanied postings on children, however, the perceived effect varied depending on the child's age and personality. S/Ps with older children or those with more introverted personalities reported how their child had found accompanied postings were more difficult to manage as they moved away from friends. Some women described social difficulties and uncertainty or anxiety about leaving friends and having to make new ones among children.

"…they've made their friends, they've got settled at school... and then again it's "Ok we're moving" and they've got to say goodbye to friends that they've grown up with… it's the unknown for them, isn't it? You know are they going to like their school? Are they going to have friends?" Allison, 30s (NCO, Army)

"… my [child] had something like three or four postings… before [they] was about six or seven… [postings] did make [them] withdrawn… [they] didn't know how to socialise very well. [They] relied on his [sibling]… [they] had a rough time." Carrie, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

In contrast, other women described no or positive impacts of accompanied postings on some children. Younger children were not greatly affected by accompanied postings as they had not yet started school or made firm friendship groups. Other women explained how the process of constantly having to make new friends meant their children had developed strong social skills.

"… because they have had to move and have had to make friends. So [postings] ha[ve] made them quite sociable and confident..." Suzy, 40s (officer, Army)

The other major concern women discussed in relation to the effects of accompanied postings on children was education. Finding school places was described as being difficult, particularly when trying to arrange school places from overseas or when postings occurred after the deadline for applications for school places. This was discussed only by S/Ps of officers, who appeared more willing or able to advocate for access to schools that suited their children.

"…we were invariably posted so that we just missed the [school places] deadline. So we were always seen as late and so you had to wait for places… you want your kids to go to a decent school, you don't want your children to necessarily you know go to the school with the places left… because the local population don't want to go there or the failing school…" Joan, 40s (officer, Army)

Such problems could impact positively or negatively on the quality of the education children from military families received, depending on the school. As a result of advocating on behalf of their children, some women reported how they became more aware of their child's educational and social needs than they may have been otherwise.

"…[the new school] called me in and they said that [my child] was three to four years behind in [their] maths and [their]English… they were starting to help [my child], but nobody had ever picked that up in [previous posting]… it was quite a negative attitude towards [my child] in [previous posting]… as if [they were] a naughty child." Janet, 40s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

"… sometimes you find you go to some different schools which have a really positive impact on your children, and obviously you get to other schools which are a negative. But I think you also learn as a parent more quickly what your children's needs are. And you can actually try to put them in a school which is more appropriate for them." Kim, 40s (officer, Army)

Women described undertaking a range of measures to try and provide stability for children and counter the disruptions and upheavals of accompanied postings. These steps varied by rank. Most families of officer personnel explained that they opted to send their children to boarding school, a decision the higher officer wage, combined with Armed Forces discounts, allowed them to pursue more easily. Women with younger children or those married to Service personnel of lower rank described how they chose unaccompanied postings or developed strategies to manage the negative effects of accompanied postings on their children as best they could.

"… all of [my children] started boarding aged eight, which when I look at eight year olds now I think 'Gosh we must have been pretty convinced it was the right thing' … but we were struggling to get [them] into the same school. Our second [child] was very slow to speak when [they] started going to new schools." Kristen, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

"… my third [child] starts school in September and I've made a conscious decision not to put [them] in the school where all the forces kids go… I want [their] friends to be as stable as possible and then if need be [they]'ll the transient one … I'm witnessing it from my older [child] how difficult [leaving friends] can be." Molly, 40s (NCO, Army)

1.3 Effects on wider family

Accompanied postings sometimes resulted in S/Ps living at great distances from their parents, siblings and other relations (Table 47, Appendix 4.3). While some women described how the distance made their relationships with their family closer, others discussed how the distances

involved had negative effects on their relationships with family and limited the support they were able to provide or receive during times of crisis. S/Ps made great efforts to maintain these relationships, especially for the benefit of their children.

For a few S/Ps, the physical separation made them closer to their family and more appreciative of the time they were able to spend together.

> *"…certainly with my mum and dad, its brought me closer to them cause I think you find when you do see them it's sort of precious time really. When you're with people all the time you sort of take it for granted… we look forward to when the next time we're going to see each other."* Allison, 30s (NCO, Army)

However, other women described the opposite effect, with families drifting apart due to a lack of contact and interaction.

> *"…because they're not immediate and we're away… relationships do suffer. There isn't… as much contact…"* Gina, 40s (NCO, RAF)

The physical distance between S/Ps and family members could act as a barrier for women in accessing, or anticipating accessing, emotional and practical support. This was especially true for women who were close to their families or had not previously moved away from home. S/Ps of NCO ranked personnel discussed this issue more frequently than S/Ps of officers, possibly as they were less likely to have lived away from home previously.

> *"… my son was ill when I [had medical problem]… I could have really done with my family there! Because my mum would have come straight over and taken him and looked after him."* Courtney, 30s (NCO, RAF)

> *"…I'd never experienced being away from my family… it wasn't too far away going to [Europe] for my first posting. But going to [North America]…. it's the other side of the world…"* Allison, 30s (NCO, Army)

Adjusting to the distance from familiar and secure social networks was particularly an issue when there were family illnesses or bereavements. During such times, the physical distance from family meant S/Ps described how they were not always able to provide practical support for their family.

"… it is difficult if somebody's ill. The sort of distance of going back and forth… you want to be there for people, but you can't..." Jennifer, 30s (officer, Army)

"I've missed some funerals because we're in the military… I was [posted] when two of my [relatives] died and I had the children and the children were in school and my youngest was upset because his father was away. So there was no way I could go…to a funeral." Toni, 40s (officer, RAF)

Some women reported that the physical distance from family members affected the relationship between their children and grandparents.

"… when my older [child], obviously only seeing [grandmother] and [granddad] a few days every few months was you know much more reserved… it took him longer to become comfortable" Louise, 30s (officer, RAF, transitioned)

Women and families described travelling regularly to maintain these connections and relationships and ensure children spent time with members of their wider family. This was more commonly discussed by S/Ps of officers who may have financially been in a better position to travel to see family.

"…We used to go back and then track everybody down and we ended up doing all the running around and making arrangements to meet people! Instead of it being the other way round." Gina, 40s (NCO, RAF)

"…as a military family you end up trugging all over the country and making sure that you maintain those links with grandparents… [husband's parents are]… I guess less willing to travel so we have to go and see them more…." Joan, 40s (officer, Army)

1.4 Effects of transition

Following transition out of Service, personnel returned to living fulltime in the family home (Table 48, Appendix 4.3). While a welcome change after years of periodic separation for some women, others described a period of adaptation to the permanent presence of their husband.

"It's much easier having him at home. So you can actually talk to people, you know talk to them and read [his] face, the expressions and body language, rather than when they're away all the time." Louise, 30s (officer, RAF, transitioned)

"…you've gone for so many years of them being away for such long periods of time or you know being at work so late or and then having them home all the time… you have to find a way of making your life work together again…" Mary, 30s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

No major effects of transition on children or S/Ps relationship with wider family were discussed.

2. The influence of S/P experiences of family relations during accompanied postings on well-being

Three major themes were identified concerning how S/P well-being was influenced by family relations during accompanied postings ((Figure 22 (Table 49, Appendix 4.3));

- competing demands on S/P **identity** as *mothers* or family members (*kinship*)
- limitations to personal **agency** in regards to *concessions* involved in decision-making about family life and the resulting *resentment* within relationships
- **connectedness** between S/Ps and their husband, children and members of their wider family and *support, tension* and *disconnection* experienced during accompanied postings

2.1 Identity

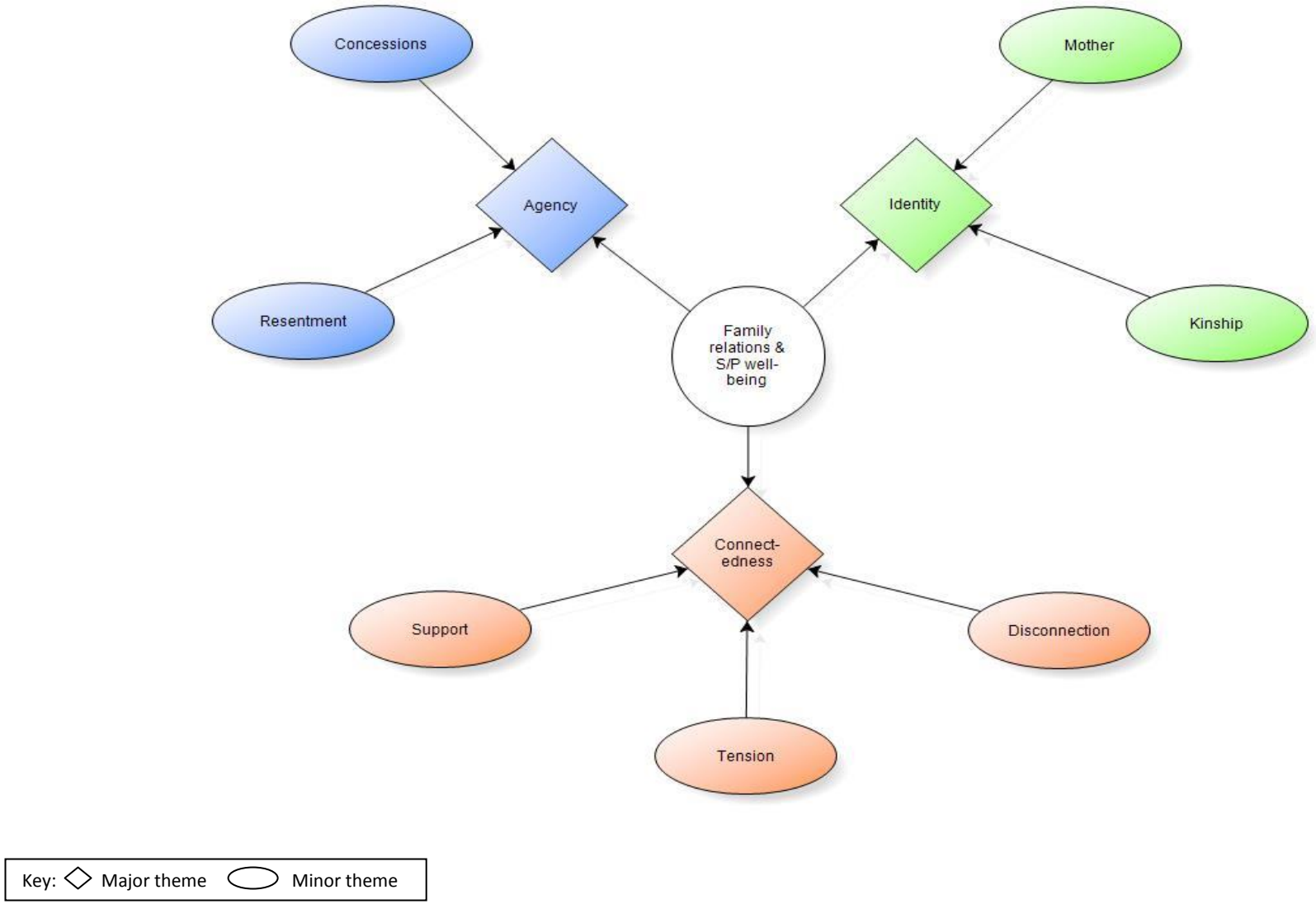
Some women described anxiety and worry as a result of the difficulties their children had in adapting to accompanied postings, which could lead to tensions between their identity as mothers and wives. Women discussed how accompanied postings required them to balance the demands of their wider family network against competing demands from their own family within the military context they lived in. This theme was formed of two sub-themes; *mother* and *kinship.*

a. Mother

Children's negative experiences of adjusting socially following accompanied postings could negatively affect the well-being of S/Ps. Many women described feelings of sadness and heartbreak on behalf of children who struggled with adapting to new postings because of the responsibility they felt as parents.

"… it's absolutely heart-breaking to have your little boy sob about missing his old friends and not feeling like he has any friends at that school." Joan, 40s (officer, Army)

Figure 22: Thematic diagram of the influence of S/P experiences of family relations during accompanied postings on well-being



Other women described anxiety related to the inability of their children to cope with accompanied postings.

> *"… [they don't] settle and just get on with it as easily as [their] older [sibling]. And that's something that weighs on me… here if [they're} having a low moment… that's what is prominent in [their] mind how happy [they were] at [the] last place and maybe not as happy here… it makes me feel anxious. It makes me feel really anxious."* Molly, 40s (NCO, Army)

The negative impacts of accompanied postings on children, and therefore on women, led some participants to question their continual involvement in accompanied postings, creating direct tension between their roles as mothers and wives.

> *"…you realise that your life actually affects them and that perhaps you should be protecting them…I do feel sorry for them that they have to move… If this one doesn't go very well I think we won't put [them] through many more."* Toni, 40s (officer, RAF)

b. Kinship

In addition to the roles women were expected to perform within their own family and community, S/Ps described the caring roles they encountered with wider family networks and the tensions with fulfilling these because of their husband's military career. Women explained how performing the gendered responsibilities and duties inherent in these roles was not always possible due to the physical distances between S/Ps and family members as a result of accompanied postings. The inability to fulfil these roles led to stress, worry and anxiety among S/Ps who felt unable to provide or access support from these networks.

Women explained the importance of not only receiving by giving support within their family networks despite the distances created by accompanied postings. Balancing the demands of their own families at home and competing family roles at a distance was described as stressful.

> *"…you want to be there for people, but you can't. Or you have to sort of you know try and work around when is the best time to go down and see people … that is a bit stressful."* Jennifer, 30s (officer, Army)

Other women described how the inability to provide support contributed to additional worry and stress during challenging times.

"…when I [had health problem] out in [Europe] it was a horrific year. We had you know grandparents pass away, my [relative] was diagnosed with [XXXX]… my mother was… really, really torn. She didn't know whether to come out to me or to stay at home and look after her [parent] who was very ill… it was really not only hard on me, it was hard on them too because they felt awful about not being able to come out to support me" Courtney, 30s (NCO, RAF)

More extreme examples of this tension were given. While posted overseas, one of Kristen's parents died shortly after she gave birth. Because of the timing of these two events, she described how she was unable to fly home for the funeral. She explained how the demands of these competing roles placed her in a position where she was without the practical support she may have received otherwise from her family. In addition, she was unable to attend to her kinship obligations as a daughter and provide support to her family because of her new role as a mother.

"… it was a terrible dilemma because of course I was meant to go back for [their] funeral, but I couldn't cause I had a new born baby and it was a really difficult time… I just had [husband] and a supportive family back in the UK, but I wasn't really in a position to have their practical help." Kristen, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

The tensions between women's multiple roles as mothers, (military) wives and family members were stretched further by S/Ps anticipation of future caring roles. A few S/Ps discussed assuming caring responsibilities for elderly relatives when they were unable to live independently but were unsure how they would manage this along with accompanied postings and within current military policies and procedures.

"…we're conscious we're entering the era of parents that … might need looking after… it's alright at the minute, but you know it could be coming up for us and how we'd manage that with us being posted away… it's just something you know is sitting on your shoulder, you're thinking about it for the future when you move." Suzy, 40s (officer, Army)

2.2 Agency

As previously discussed and illustrated in other chapters, the choices available to S/Ps were limited by their military context and as such were not active 'choices'. Because of these limited options, S/Ps described the concessions they made in order to preserve the social and educational stability of children, either by sending them to boarding school or opting for unaccompanied postings. Such decisions were reported to lead to tension and remorse due to the sacrifices women made as wives and mothers and resentment towards their husbands. Two sub-themes comprised this major theme; *concessions* and *resentment*.

a. Concessions

S/Ps reported how they were obliged to make concessions in relation to their family life in order to obtain social and educational stability for their children as a result of the limited options available to them within a military context. This led to women opting for unaccompanied postings or moving alongside their husband and sending their children to boarding school, sacrificing some of their identities as wives or mothers. Women discussed the remorse and continued uncertainty they felt about their decision.

Some women directly addressed the lack of choice available when in making the decision to send their children to boarding school and the remorse they felt about the concessions they had made to their family life.

> *"We ended up doing what all Army families do and that is sending our children to school ridiculously young. Which I think I'll always regret, but I don't know what else we could have done really."* Carrie, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

The compromises women reported making to their family life in order to counter these issues left some women questioning their identity as mothers. Most S/Ps of officers discussed sending their children to boarding school to try and mitigate the social and educational impacts of accompanied postings. For women who had a strong sense of being a 'good mother', the decision to separate their family by sending their children to school and sacrificing part of their role as a mother was described as difficult to resolve against this ideal, leading to feelings of uncertainty and guilt.

> *"…I prided myself on being a good mum when they were younger and [sending them away has] been quite hard… I've missed out a bit on their childhood because they've not been here… I panic every now and again and think 'Have I done the right thing?'… they*

done really well you know out of it because they've had a good education, they're well-rounded …" Suzy, 40s (officer, Army)

For other S/Ps, the perceived lack of choice regarding decisions to separate their family was described as having more serious influences on their well-being because of the absence of their children from the family home.

"… [I was] not depressed by any stretch of the imagination, but I was quite low because I had to leave my two older sons with their father… they're part of my family unit and I wanted them to live with me… we were posted in an area where I grew up… but I didn't feel I could enjoy it because we weren't living as a family unit." Molly**,** 40s (NCO, Army)

Where boarding was not an option, S/Ps discussed opting for unaccompanied postings in order to achieve stability for their children. If the separation from their husband was only for a short period of time, women described their willingness to sacrifice a small period of time as a couple for the ultimate benefit of their children.

"I don't mind because… I just want… what's best for my children and so they come first. That's how I see it." Allison, 30s (NCO, Army)

Although the sacrifices to their relationship with their husbands were perceived as of ultimate benefit to their children, some women reported that they found these separations difficult to manage as they directly called into tension their identities as wives and mothers.

"… it's the education reason for why we moved home, definitely… I would still like to be travelling around with my husband. I don't like it at all… us being apart, but for my children it was right to move them home, to stabilise their education." Kim, 40s (officer, Army)

b. Resentment

Several S/Ps described feelings of resentment or blame towards their husband as a result of a perceived lack of personal agency over their lives and the concessions they were required to make regarding their employment, social networks and family life because of their husband's career. However, this did not necessarily influence S/P well-being. Recognising their frustrations were with the nature of the job or the military institution rather than with their husband, some S/Ps explained how these emotions had minimal effects on their relationship.

Others found it more difficult to contain these emotions, resulting in more serious relationship problems.

The concessions women made to their lives in order to support their husband's career, often at the sacrifice of their own, were difficult for some women to adjust to and could lead to accusations of blame towards Service personnel. For some women, this resentment stemmed from the frustrations they felt as a result of the restrictions his work and the institution placed on their lives.

> *"… you're very resentful quite a lot of the time. Resentful of the job and resentful of not being able to do things because of his job… cross that maybe you were at home with the children all the time and obviously you haven't got your family support up there…"* Mary, 30s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

Some of the women who described blame or resentment in their relationship as a result of accompanied postings explained how this could result in short term issues but did not lead to major arguments or tension.

> *"… I take it out on my husband a bit. I blame him, it's all his fault!… he just accepts it. He knows that I don't mean it. And obviously he quite understands it…"* Dee, 30s (NCO, Army)

Even relationships that were described as strong could suffer from if women felt there were not appropriate avenues in which to feedback their frustrations with military life.

> *"I think you have to work really hard on your relationship to kind of stay above [the blame] and to manage it… it could be quite painful I think and quite damaging… our relationship is solid enough that we can kind of cope with those times and I think sometimes we just kind of crawl out of it…"* Joan, 40s (officer, Army)

For other women, the resentment they felt extended beyond employment to the perceived implications of being married to someone in the military on their family and social connections. Women perceived their husband as being at least partially for the concessions they were required to make in these areas, leading to occasional tensions in their relationships as they sought to make meaning of their decisions.

"…I was, maybe at times, difficult to live with because I was potentially quite accusing to him that he brought us to this area and the reason that we weren't living as a family unit was his fault… not ongoing, but sometimes it would definitely be brought up by me." Molly, 40s (NCO, Army)

Blame was also described by S/Ps who opted for unaccompanied postings in order to reduce the disruption of accompanied postings on children. Women who felt they were responsible for a disproportionate amount of caring and family duties due to their husband's absence explained how this placed strain on their relationship.

"…he'd just come home at weekends and I think that put… a huge strain our relationship... they can kind of live as a single man during the week… you're at home supporting the family, doing everything, working fulltime, doing everything..." Janet, 40s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

2.3 Connectedness

Moving away from family as a result of accompanied postings meant women had to incorporate the distances involved into how they maintained relationships and gained support from their kin networks. Such situations were described as benefiting but also testing social connections between S/Ps and their family members, leading to tension and disconnection in some families. Three sub-themes comprised this major theme: *support, tension* and *disconnection*.

a. Support

As previously discussed in S/Ps experiences of family relationships during accompanied postings, concerns about an inability to access emotional and practical support over the distances involved in accompanied postings were more commonly discussed by women married to NCO ranked Service personnel. These concerns could have implications for the well-being of S/Ps who discussed concerns about an inability to access their usual avenues of social support following such moves, particularly if they were close to their family, or during times of additional need.

"…As much as you talk on the phone and things it's not the same as in person. So it's that can be hard. And you know if you're feeling down that day and not having your mum around the corner or your sisters…" Allison, 30s (NCO, Army)

Other women described theirs concerns about how they might manage during anticipated times of emergency and were uncertain of who they would be able to rely on for practical or emotional support if support from family members was not available.

> *"… [if] I have a sickness bug or something and my husband's away, I don't know what I'd do actually… who I'd call upon. That would be quite worrying… you really miss your family because you know that's who you call upon at times like that."* Courtney, 30s (NCO, RAF)

Other women who had experienced personal crises explained how the lack of emotional and practical support from family members had contributed to poorer well-being.

> *"… I didn't have any family in the area of course when I'd had [postnatal depression]… I'd had no support… that was quite hard… it did affect my well-being definitely at that point."* Gina, 40s (NCO, RAF)

b. Tension

Although some S/Ps reported experiencing improved support and understanding within their relationship as a result of accompanied postings, for others accompanied postings could cause disagreements and issues within their relationship with their husband. While family members were described as providing an important avenue of support for women, a lack of understanding or support from family members or difficulties maintaining relationships between grandparents and children could lead to tension.

While quickly resolved by most military couples, the stress of moving was described by some women as resulting in disagreements over issues such as the state of military accommodation. For other S/Ps, differences between military and civilian standards and the expectation S/Ps would understand military processes such as the stringency of checks when moving out of Service accommodation could result in minor arguments.

> *"… obviously he knows what the military expects and so we had a little bit of tension you know in terms of "Well no that would be fine, that'll do" and he was "No!"* Kathleen, 40s (officer, Army)

Some women explained how transition could heighten tension in relationships, particularly if S/Ps and children elected to live unaccompanied for a period before he left Service and women felt they were responsible for a disproportionate amount of caring and family responsibilities. The repeated presence and absence of Service personnel during the week was reported to introduce additional challenges to the relationships of military couples who had not previously elected to live in this way. For some women, managing long distance relationships while also managing the running their own home (rather than Service accommodation) was described as more stressful than deployments due to the constant presence and absence of their husband

> *"…when you're deployed that's it. You know this is what it's going to be like for six months… all of a sudden you have your own place … you've got a husband whose away all week, comes home on a Friday night and then needs to leave at Sunday lunchtime to get back to work… that was actually more stressful than deployments."* Linda, 40s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

For one woman, the disruption and stress she experienced during this time led to her questioning whether she was more suited to managing on her own and happier without the presence of her husband.

> *"… it did make me kind of re-evaluate our relationship really and kind of think… 'Where do I want my life to go'… 'Do I need to have a man really?' It sounds terrible! But you get so used to being on your own and doing things on your own that, it's hard then to involve someone else."* Mary, 30s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

Despite some families growing closer as a result of accompanied postings, some women described a lack of support from family which, combined with difficulties in managing the expectations of family members and maintaining relationships, could contribute to tension within family relationships. Carrie encountered a lack of support and understanding regarding her depression from her husband, describing his response as not being able to *"cope with people who can't cope"*, an attitude she felt was *"typical military"*. Her mother-in-law also did not offer support, dismissing Carrie's concerns out of greater concern for her son's well-being and career. On reflection, she described how the lack of support and understanding from her immediate family contributed to her feelings of isolation and vulnerability at the time;

"…I felt quite vulnerable as a mother out of my depths and I suddenly thought 'Actually I could have done with somebody just giving me a hug and saying don't worry, we'll see what we can do!' No one ever did." Carrie, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

Attempting to maintain relationships between children and their grandparents was also described as causing strain for women if family members were not willing to travel to see them. S/Ps reported having to commit additional effort and emotional labour to invest in the relationship between their children and grandparents and the strain this could introduce into their own relationship with relatives.

"…for me it feels like we have to put more effort in to make sure the kids go over there and maintain that relationship… I guess it just feels a bit more difficult for me." Joan, 40s (officer, Army)

c. Disconnection

The physical distance from loved ones was described by women as being difficult to manage following accompanied postings and was more prominent among S/Ps of non-officer personnel, some of whom described having very close relationships with their family members. The distances involved and concerns about the accessibility of support were described by S/Ps were making them feel displaced from the social networks they had previously been a large and active part of and unable to fulfil kinship roles within their family.

Some women described how their physical separation from their family and inability to be as involved in their lives led them to perceive themselves to be at a step removed from their family and no longer integral to the family network. For some, this centred on their inability to perform particular social roles because of being posted away from home.

"…you know seeing your nieces and nephews grow up… you know three months is massive when they're little. And to see the change… in them… I've found it hard." Allison, 30s (NCO, Army)

Women explained how they felt they had missed out on a relationship with certain family members as a result of accompanied postings, leading to jealousy and envy about the support and time other family members were able to spend together.

"…I feel as though I've missed out a bit with me mum… loads of time when I was away and stuff and she'd say "Oh me and your sister are going shopping with the children" I'd felt like I were missing out… Oh I wish I were with them." Janet, 40s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

The sense of disconnection was elevated for women who perceived their family did not fully understand their situation as a military family and the importance of maintaining contact. Some women described how this perceived lack of understanding created a perception of separation and distance between S/Ps and their relatives.

"…you get put into a compartment in their head where you know it's just another move… [they think] we're used to it so therefore we [are] really strong and can cope… it's almost a little bit of out of sight, out of mind … without the regular contact you are a bit estranged really. As a military family you feel a bit estranged." Gina, 40s (NCO, Army)

While adjusting to being away from family could be difficult for S/Ps, a perceived lack of understanding about military life from family members could also contribute to a feeling of separation even when S/Ps were living in the same community as their families.

"… I found that quite hard when I first moved home in that yes I was technically surrounded by my family who did not understand a thing about what I was going through." Kim, 40s (officer, Army)

Re-adjusting to the social roles and expectations of being a "family member" and reconnecting with family after living independently from them could take some time for S/Ps to become accustomed to after previously adapting to managing these relationships at a distance.

"I actually found it hard moving home. As much as I love them all dearly… it felt a bit too much at first… it can be quite hard… you get used to that relationship at a distance I suppose." Kim, 40s (officer, Army)

Summary

This section began with a description of S/Ps experiences of family relations during accompanied postings and transition, encompassing relationships with their husband and wider family and the effects of accompanied postings on children. The effects of these experiences on S/P well-being were then explored.

Women described anxiety and worry about the negative effects of accompanied postings on their children but attempts to mitigate these effects by sending their children to boarding school could impact on how S/Ps viewed themselves as mothers. S/Ps were aware of how their lifestyle could be at odds with their responsibilities as a member of a wider family group and described balancing demands from their wider family network against those from their own family within a military context. The limitations military life placed on the agency of S/Ps required women to make difficult decisions regarding family separation, either by sending their children to boarding school or going unaccompanied in order to provide social and educational stability for their children. This perceived lack of choice could cause resentment within military couples if S/Ps came to blame their husbands for the frequent accompanied postings they experienced and the resulting problems with social support and employment. Women discussed how the physical distance from family members that resulted from accompanied postings led to feelings of disconnection and tension within family networks.

Spouses/partners experiences of social networks during accompanied postings and influences on well-being

This section describes S/Ps experiences of social connections with friends and other S/Ps during accompanied postings and the transition process. The influences of these experiences on S/Ps well-being were then explored.

1. S/Ps experiences of social networks during accompanied postings

1.1 Effects on relationships with other S/Ps

Women described their experiences of meeting other S/Ps in the military community following accompanied postings, community life on military bases and the practical and emotional support they received from other S/Ps, civilians and colleagues (Table 50, Table 51, Appendix 4.4).

a. Building social networks

While some women reported minimal difficulties in meeting other S/Ps, others encountered problems building social connections within the military community which were related to their individual personalities and family circumstances. Some women reported that relationships with other S/Ps were lacking in depth.

Some S/Ps described forming relationships within the military community following an accompanied posting as an easy process. This was more common among S/Ps of officers, possibly as they had previously experienced prior moves away from home and therefore had greater experience in building new social connections.

> *"… I always found friends… I found friends and social life wherever I was."* Carrie, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

> *"… like attracts like really… I'm quite happy to chat… I think that's half of it, just talking to people. And then you just naturally drift in with friends…"* Suzy, 40s (officer, Army)

Other women discussed the difficulties they experienced in trying to make close and meaningful relationships with S/Ps, distinguishing these relationships from the acquaintances they made.

"…it's quite difficult [to make friends] when you are moving around… you can maybe meet a couple of really nice people and you stay friends with them, but you can meet really horrible people as well. And you don't stay friends with them!…" Dee, 30s (NCO, Army)

"I've met… only a handful I would say that were genuine, you know, good friends." Allison, 30s (NCO, Army)

The ease with which S/Ps were able to negotiate the process of meeting people within a new community following accompanied postings seemed to be, in part, influenced by their personality. Women who described themselves as extroverts found their outgoing nature a benefit in building new connections, while those who were more introverted explained how their reserve could be a hindrance in social situations.

"… one of my friends here says "Oh [Kristen], within twenty minutes you know everyone's life history!" I'm very good at kind of getting to know people and sussing out people whose company I like and I'm quite intuitive "Oh, yes I'm going to like her, I'll spend more time with her!"..." Kristen, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

"… I'm not a person to go "Oh hi, I'm so and so and I've just moved in"! I'm not like that. I wouldn't go and knock on people's houses and introduce myself…" Allison, 30s (NCO, Army)

Many of the social connections women established with other S/Ps in the military community were described as depending on the family structure of women at the time of an accompanied posting. Women who had children reported how they were able to use this as a means of negotiating their way into social networks within the community through playgroups or by meeting other mothers at their children's school. The social benefits of having children were more commonly described by S/Ps of officers. The focus of many community-based activities and groups on mothers of young children meant women with older children described finding it difficult to meet other S/Ps within the military communities they moved into.

"… what you naturally do as a mother, when your children are small, is go to groups and take your children to playgroups. And you meet people that way, that's really natural and really easy." Courtney, 30s (NCO, RAF)

"… my children are older now so it's not as eas[y]. You know you can't take them to like toddler group or anything… if you've got young children then there's more opportunity [to meet people]…" Dee, 30s (NCO, Army)

The limited ways in which women were able to meet other S/Ps if they did not participate in particular community activities was explicitly described by one woman.

"If you don't have small children at the gate going to school, that cuts down who you're meeting. If you're not an avid churchgoer, that cuts down who you're meeting. And when you're not in work, that cuts down who you're meeting." Melissa, 50s (officer, RAF)

Many women reported how despite initial difficulties meeting other S/Ps following accompanied postings, they were eventually able to create new social connections. However, for some, the substance of these relationships was described as lacking. Relationships with other S/Ps within the community were described by some women as casual friendships between people in a similar situation rather than based on common interests or meaningful connection. Because of this, such relationships were unlikely to be maintained once families moved onto new postings but appeared more accepted by S/Ps of officers.

"There's a lot of surface friendships, a lot of socialising on the surface… I have met a handful of really nice people that I would stay friends with for a long time..." Gina, 40s (NCO, RAF)

"… [relationships were] quite superficial and if I had to give you a list of people that I'm still in touch from my forces days now it would sadly be very small as a wife because I didn't have a massive amount…in common with a lot of them." Kristen, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

For other women, the relationships they made with other S/Ps were somewhere in between; not trivial nor based on deeper connections they may have with people they considered friends. Despite being outside their usual social circle, these relationships were described as important to women.

"…there might be people that you know you go to the cinema with or you meet up and go to the mess with or you know things like that… it's not quite that, as trivial… they

wouldn't perhaps necessarily be people that I would necessarily be that friendly with." Joan, 40s (officer, Army)

b. Life within the military community

Life within the military community on bases and the social activities that came alongside it formed an important means of building social connections for S/Ps. Women described how the demographics of the community meant they were able to find other S/Ps who had a similar family structure to them. The regimental and rank structure of the military was reported to influence the social connections of S/Ps, with women discussing how they tended to make friends with S/Ps married to Service personnel of similar rank.

Women reported how the commonalities of life within military bases meant they were able to find other S/Ps at a similar stage of life to them or with a similar background or set of interests.

"… all the way through [husband]'s Army time you just knew on an Army patch… the people next door were similar age, the woman probably wasn't working, they probably had children and there were loads of people to go and knock on the door and have tea with." Kristen, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

"…Nearly every single time we moved I found somebody who was likeminded. And I think actually it's one of the strengths of the Army, is the Army patch." Carrie, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

Social activities were provided for military families through the expected roles of S/Ps and with support from the military and its representatives. These were described as primarily centring around toddler groups, coffee mornings and wives clubs. Some women explained how they perceived these activities to be of limited interest and that they contained cliques of other S/Ps.

"… [coffee mornings] can be quite [a] difficult environment probably because I guess I'm not the kind of person that wants to sit around and chat about last night's telly or the housework and what I'm going to cook for tea tonight… there comes a certain point where I don't feel that I can keep having those conversations…" Joan, 40s (officer, Army)

"…there is a coffee morning that you could go to, but I think I went once… I didn't go again… people stay… within cliques." Dee, 30s (NCO, Army)

S/Ps of Service personnel who moved within regiments or who worked in particular military units described how the regimental structure of the military institution allowed social connections to be maintained and developed across multiple postings. As a result of the community moving together, women often knew many of the other S/Ps in the new location and were able to carry forward their friendships into the new posting.

> *"I've been very fortunate because my husband's infantry. So quite often the whole regiment moves round together… a lot of my time I would be in one location and we'd all move together… you know a number of the people for years."* Kim, 40s (officer, Army)

> *"…my husband worked for a very small close knit [unit]… when you're on postings you end up seeing… people again that you've seen before because it's just a small world… everyone tends to know everybody."* Gina, 40s (NCO, RAF)

For women whose husband did not move as part of a regiment, such social connections were described as absent. These women explained how they had to seek out and create their own connections within the military community following an accompanied posting. This was particularly discussed by the S/Ps of high-ranking officers who had not been posted as part of a regiment for various operational reasons or who were in certain sections of the military.

> *"… my husbands' in the Corp so we don't all go as a regiment… he gets posted as an individual. So you haven't got a ready-made network when you arrive. You know you don't know people."* Suzy, 40s (officer, Army)

The hierarchical rank structure of the military was reported to provide a framework for social networks among S/Ps, albeit a restrictive one. S/Ps described how they tended to associate with women married to Service personnel of a similar rank, replicating the military hierarchy throughout the community and contributing to their incorporation. This was most commonly discussed by women married to officers or Service personnel in positions of command.

> *"…I think there is still a division between officer's wives and Army… and soldier's wives mixing… it doesn't happen very often… there is still that division."* Anna, 40s (officer, Army)

> *"…officers not mixing with the other ranks, I think is quite common. But sad because we're all people and wives at the end of the day."* Molly, 40s (NCO, Army)

c. Support

The perceived benefits of life within the military community were evident in women's descriptions of practical and emotional support from other S/Ps. In contrast to descriptions of the support provided by the military institution, women discussed how this support helped mitigate some of the difficulties they faced as a result of being posted far away from wider family networks.

> *"… you develop quite good networks at supporting each other because we've never lived by our family. I've never had a grandma in the same town to help or sisters or brothers. My family's scattered all over the country."* Kristen, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

> *"… [it was] a strong knit little community… there was no back-biting, everyone was really helpful… people would just be there to help you and it was great. And that was fantastic support."* Gina, 40s (NCO, RAF)

However, descriptions of this support and understanding appeared to differ according to the various postings and locations families moved into and was not always present in every posting.

> *"… in the past there's been support. But not here… you can get some really good support."* Dee, 30s (NCO, Army)

1.2 Effects on relationships with friends, colleagues and civilians

S/Ps described making determined efforts to maintain friendships outside of the military community despite the often long periods of time between meetings (Table 51, Appendix 4.4). Some S/Ps described how it could be difficult to meet non-military people once within the military community and explained how accompanied postings had reduced the number and quality of their social connections.

Relationships with friends who were not connected with the military were described as the cornerstone of their social networks by some S/Ps, providing emotional and practical support throughout their husband's military Service and numerous accompanied postings. This form of support from friends was more commonly discussed by S/Ps of officers.

"I had my old school friends and they were constants, I didn't keep up with them all the time, but I'd see who I wanted to see when I came back to the UK or when I was able…" Carrie, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

"I've got a really strong friendship group with the girls that I went to school with… and we're all still really good friends…" Mary, 30s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

In order to build social connections with people in civilian society, women reported using similar methods as those used to meet other S/Ps, such as employment, their children's school or community activities. However, perceived differences between military and civilian communities could make forming new connections difficult.

"My friends have been made through [child]'s football and where I work…" Allison, 30s (NCO, Army)

"I've got civilian neighbours front and back. Actually one chap smiled and said hello before Christmas. But that's it!" Joan, 40s (officer, Army)

Some S/Ps who worked described receiving support from their colleagues, although others described a lack of understanding about military life meant they did not always appreciate the realities of military life.

"…I do get on you know reasonably well with my colleagues so that's good. And they are really supportive, they understand… I can sometimes… be coming into work maybe a little more stressed than usual!" Courtney, 30s (NCO, RAF)

"…you might be in employment here and people just wouldn't understand how you felt with your husband being away. And they'll go "Oh not long now, he'll be home in eight weeks" or ten weeks and you think 'You haven't got an igloo'!" Kim, 40s (officer, Army)

Wherever they sought to create social connections, the frequent accompanied postings S/Ps experienced meant some women described their social circles as limited in size or without close and secure friendships. Constant moves meant there was little time to build close and meaningful relationships with other people before another posting.

"I'd like to have quality friendships. Obviously when you move around a lot… I'd like to have local quality friendships and obviously they take time to build up." Molly, 40s (NCO, Army)

"… because we haven't been anywhere… long enough where you've got that really close friend. We haven't got that so we've got each other, we've got our family, we've got our Army friends, college friends dotted around, but we don't see them that often." Suzy, 40s (officer, Army)

1.3 Effects of transition on social networks

S/Ps of personnel who had transitioned out of Service discussed how their choice of location for settling down could affect their social networks either by being located in an area in which they do not have long-standing connections or having to re-establish relationships after some years away (Table 52, Appendix 4.4). Civilians were described as being less open to meeting people than those living in the military community and as having a different understanding of the world than military families.

Following transition, some S/Ps described how their choice of area to settle in had impacted on their social networks. This was especially true for families who chose to settle in areas where they were not as well-known in the community.

"…we've brought a lovely house near [XXXX]… which was [husband]'s last posting… but we're just now thinking in ten years or so, we will probably want to retire, we're not sure where to retire to because we don't have networks." Kristen, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

Moving nearer their home town and families could also be problematic as S/Ps described the process of re-establishing connections within the community after years away.

"although you know I was coming to… an area where we were only twenty minutes away from my mum and my dad… I didn't know anybody in this area. I hadn't lived in here for you know years!… I didn't know anybody in the village!" Louise, 30s (officer, RAF, transitioned)

Women described how adjusting to living among civilians was a process of adaptation, with reported differences in culture and attitude between the military and civilians.

"… the humour's slightly different I think in the Army, and the Forces… you know people look at things a lot more light-heartedly. I think that's different from [what] it is in civilian street." Janet, 40s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

2. The influence of S/P experiences of social networks during accompanied postings on well-being

Two major themes were identified exploring how S/P well-being was affected by experiences of social networks during accompanied postings (Figure 23 (Table 53, Appendix 4.4));

- challenges to S/P **identity** through *assuming rank* according to the roles they were ascribed by others in the military and civilian communities and judgement on their role as *mothers*
- S/P **connectedness** to other S/Ps, friends and civilians and the *support and belonging*, *grief and loss* and *isolation and disconnection* experienced

2.1 Identity

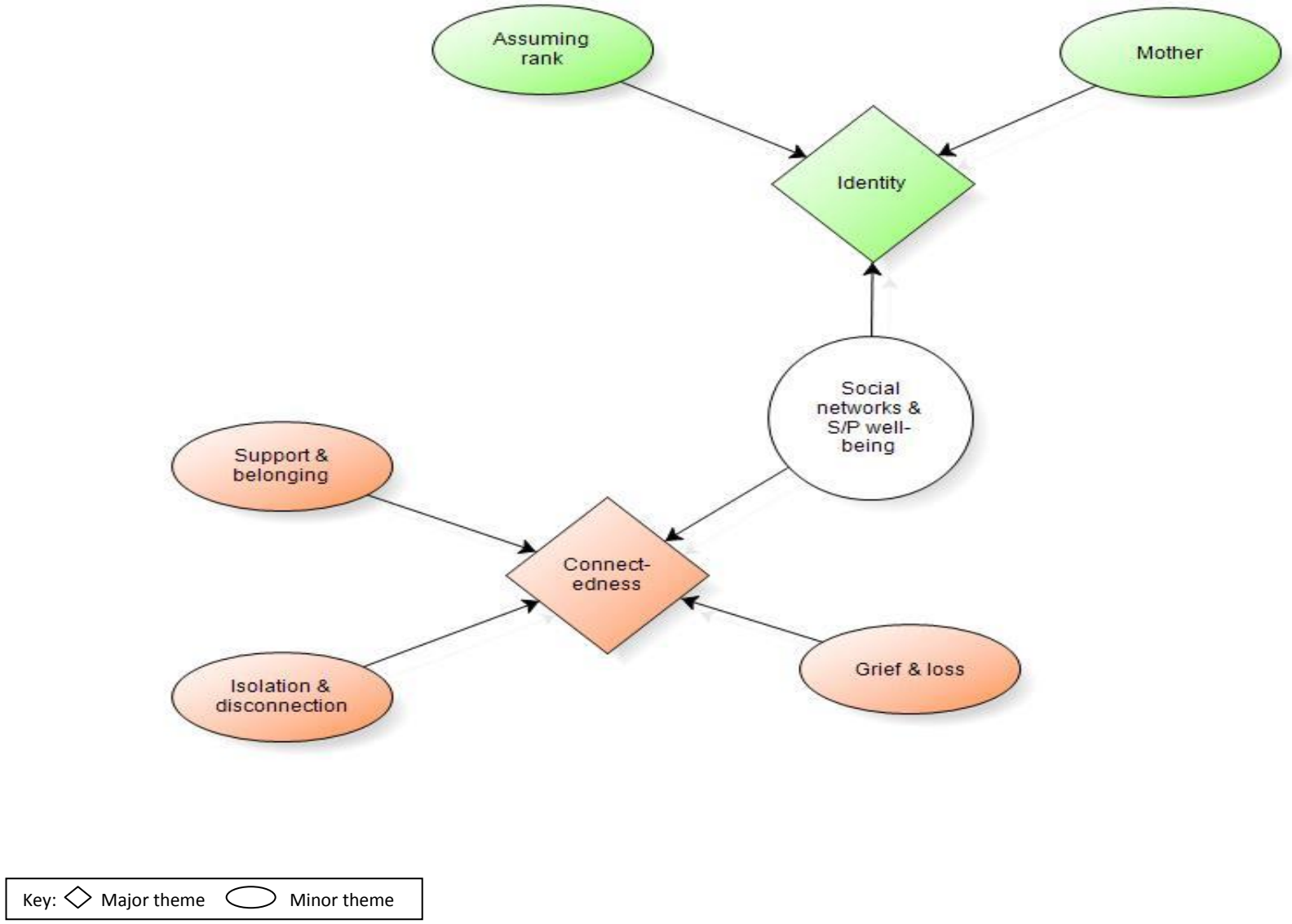
As in previous sections, women described how their military and civilian social networks ascribed identities according to their husband's rank or through their roles as mothers. However, with social connections in a process of flux between different postings, the influence of other parties on creating or moulding these identities depended on the circumstances and relationships involved. Some women described suspicions about the motives of other S/Ps in the community, leading them to be wary of other women or self-exclude from the military community. Women described judgement on their role as a mother from women in both the military and civilian communities. This theme was comprised of two sub-themes: *assuming rank* and *mother*.

a. Assuming rank

The imposition of the hierarchical structure of the military on non-serving S/Ps of Service personnel could make building connections with other S/Ps difficult given the power dynamics implicit within it. Some women questioned the sincerity of the extensions of friendship made towards them because of their incorporation into their husband's position in the community, leading to self-withdrawal or isolation from military social networks.

Some women described how their incorporation into their husband's rank led to concerns about the authenticity of the social connections they made with other women in the community because of the differences in power according to their assigned positions in the

Figure 23: Thematic diagram of the influence of S/P experiences of social networks during accompanied postings on well-being



military hierarchy. This perception was more common among S/Ps of both officer and non-officer personnel with some degree of responsibility over other Service members.

> *"…it is this bizarre kind of artificial world where your husband… he has quite a lot of control over the men and women... that person has huge power over… their lives and therefore as the partner you live in this very bizarre world where everyone becomes really lovely towards you! And you're the funniest person ever to have existed for those two years and everybody wants to be your friend."* Anna, 40s (officer, Army)

Other women described how an overemphasis by some women on their husband's rank and job left them feeling other S/Ps were only interested in them because of their assigned rank and their potential to benefit their own family rather than in their value as an independent and distinct person.

> *"… people were not friendly. People are more interested in what your husband's rank is, rather than you know who you are as a person…people would say you know 'Oh where does your husband work?'… what rank he is. You know? And that really doesn't matter."* Dee, 30s (NCO, Army)

Women who felt the friendliness of other S/Ps may be based solely on self-interest, and the hope of furthering their own husband's career and prospects for promotion, explained how this resulted in wariness about accepting support and friendliness from other S/Ps. This was described as limiting the size or quality of the social connections women experienced within the community.

> *"…we just become more wary of people maybe. A bit more distrusting and a lot of people want to be friends with you because of who your husband [is]… their first question is "What rank is your husband?" or "Who's your husband?"… it's kind of how they can use you to their advantage and if your husband's going to help their husband out, and you know like promotion wise…"* Mary, 30s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

Other women who described their discomfort with the replication of the military hierarchy within the military community self-excluded from social networks that required them to recreate this structure through their social connections. In doing so, women explained how they able to passively resist incorporation into their husband's identity by only partially

interacting with the military community and seeking to establish identities independent of the military community.

> *"… there was this element of hierarchy within the group that was reflected by the husband's ranking which I didn't think was really relevant or appropriate… because of that I would… tend to have sort of a select number of people that I would socialise with on an occasional basis and then the rest of it was done off camp."* Louise, 30s (officer, RAF, transitioned)

Conversely, some women discussed how pressure from Service personnel amid concerns that women may inadvertently share information that could be harmful to their career limited their social connections.

> *"…[S/Ps] who maybe their husbands weren't the same rank [as mine] who wouldn't want to be my friend because my husband was a higher rank… their husbands maybe wouldn't want them to be friends with me because maybe they would feel that you know they wouldn't be able to tell me things that maybe they would tell lower ranks."* Mary, 30s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

As well as norms within the military community, women discussed how civilian perceptions of the military could restrict their ability to access social networks. Because of her husband's rank and the manner in which she and her children spoke, Carrie felt she was judged by civilian families at her child's school and was temporarily ignored by the other mothers at the school. This judgement extended to her son, who was excluded from social activities by other children for a time.

> *"…we kept getting this "You're posh" thing and it drove me mad cause we'd done nothing… I loathed the playground business because I could see them weighing me up!… I hated it. Absolutely loathed it!... there was lots of this poshness going on and "Oh your husband's a [high ranking officer] oh ah ooh"…"* Carrie, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

b. Mother

As previously discussed (p308), as a result of accompanied postings, S/Ps were required to make concessions to their family life by opting to send their children to boarding school in order to provide social and education stability. As well as impacting on family life, women

described how these decisions could influence their perception by others in the social networks.

Traditional viewpoints of the role of women as mothers both within civilian society and the military community meant S/Ps reported facing judgement from other women about their abilities as a mother due to a lack of understanding of the concessions military families were required to make.

> *"… when you see people's faces when I say "Oh [daughter] goes to boarding school and [son]'s going in September". They look at you like… you're the worst mum ever! … they just don't understand like why you would do that."* Allison, 30s (NCO, Army)

2.2 Connectedness

The connectedness women experienced during accompanied postings with both other S/Ps and friends and colleagues outside of the military was the most commonly discussed influence on well-being. The support women described was reported to contribute to a sense of belonging among some women, while others described how issues in accessing this support led to perceptions of disconnection and isolation. This theme was comprised on three sub-themes: *support and belonging, grief and loss* and *isolation and disconnection.*

a. Support and belonging

In providing support for women during accompanied postings in the absence of family networks, relationships with friends and other women in the military community contributed to a sense of belonging and community among S/Ps. This was more commonly described by S/Ps of officers for whom such relationships seemed more important, although there was a mix of positive and negative influences on well-being across this group. However, some women explained that they were reluctant to ask for support as they did not want to burden other S/Ps or appear weak in line with masculine military norms of strength and the "warrior" identity.

The mutual support and understanding of the vagaries of military life from other S/Ps was described as creating a sense of cohesion between women, bringing them closer together as a social group and creating a sense of connection and belonging.

"…when you're on your patch it's a lot easier and because everyone's in the same situation, everyone else knows what it's like to have your husband away all the time. And that sort of brings you closer together…" Jennifer, 30s (officer, Army)

As described previously, regiment and rank were described as providing institutional structures for women to access support across and between postings. Some women discussed this as a benefit of military life, with pre-defined positions and community established for S/Ps prior to accompanied postings whether this was welcomed or not.

"… if you're moving into a regiment then they do have people on the lookout for you. And in some ways it's easier because you've got a ready-made community which you know you will have a part in already whether you like it or not, because of 'who you are'!" Suzy, 40s (officer, Army)

Women discussed how the frequency of accompanied postings meant they had to regularly leave behind social connections. Despite the sense of security and place for S/Ps these friendships and structures were reported to afford women, uncertainties about whether they would fit in and be accepted in the next location remained for some women.

"…there are specific friends… that you can just pick up as though you'd seen them yesterday… there's a security in those friendships as well that is hard to let go of… you kind of know your place, you know that you're accepted… you just know that you fit somewhere and you don't know whether you're going to fit in the next place!" Kathleen, 40s (officer, Army)

For some women, their difficulties with the social aspects of accompanied postings were reported to be due to their reserved personalities. By developing strategies to overcome their shyness however, women were able to build connections within the community and take advantage of the support available from other women, preventing isolation.

"…I almost wear a mask for approaching new situations… you know a mask to get over my shyness if you like… I would never approach anybody… you just can't live a life if you're moving around a lot, you have to keep breaking you know the barriers… you have to put yourself out there and make yourself vulnerable cause otherwise you'll never meet people." Molly, 40s (NCO, Army)

Other women explained how they were hesitant to seek assistance from other S/Ps as they did not want to place additional burdens on the busy lives of other women or to be seen as taking advantage of the kindness of others in the community.

> *"… you don't want to [ask for support] and you feel really bad, but they're sort of like "No, no, no, don't be so silly, don't be so silly"… you always feel guilty about it, but everybody feels that way… we don't like to take advantage of people's kindness…"* Jennifer, 30s (officer, Army)

Some S/Ps perceived themselves to be self-reliant and they did not want to be seen as not being able to cope with the difficulties of military life by other S/Ps if they asked for support. Although aware that support was available from other S/Ps, the stoic culture of the Army as an institution, and the masculine, warrior identity inherent within it, was described as influencing the help-seeking behaviours of women who were concerned about appearing unable to cope with military life.

> *"…there's a big thing in the Army about manning up so you don't really like to [ask for help]…I didn't like to give out that weakness I suppose… I'm a strong person. I wouldn't want people to think I was weak maybe or that I was struggling… it happens such a lot that if you're a weak person really you'd just be falling apart all the time."* Mary, 30s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

b. Grief, loss

In contrast with women who described relationships as superficial, some women formed strong social connections within other S/Ps in the community. These women described how moving away from the extremely supportive relationships they had built with other S/Ps in the military community resulted in grief and mourning for the sense of belonging and place they had been required to leave behind.

Some women described how the farewells and losses they experienced were part and parcel of being married to someone in Service and an additional form of emotional labour women were expected to perform as a result of their husband's particular career.

> *"… it's really sort of like your job in a way where you've got to say goodbye to… people that you've had as friends and relied on and they are your family really cause you help each other out… it is hard because you've spent all that time with them and been there*

for them through maybe some not very nice things or emotional times and things like that. And then you've got to leave them…." Allison, 30s (NCO, Army)

Other women described the loss and grief they felt at moving out of the military community entirely during unaccompanied postings. In doing so, women felt they had left behind a network of supportive women who had provided an important surrogate support system when away from family.

"…I found [it] really hard when I moved home. Because even though I moved home to be with family, I felt like I'd left a family behind… even though you maybe hundreds of miles away from home you are with people that are in the same boat as you and understand what you're going through." Kim, 40s (officer, Army)

S/Ps who described these feelings of loss and grief had to come to a point of resolution in dealing with frequent accompanied postings. Kathleen described how she had come to learn she needed to go through a process of mourning before she was able to adjust to the thought of moving.

"… I almost have to physically move out of it before I can realise that actually, ok it's going to be different, but it doesn't mean that it's got to be bad… I think the grief thing is it's a kind of letting go… being sad about the fact that I'm not going to see these people on a regular basis anymore, that I'm not going to be able to share in their… lives anymore." Kathleen, 40s (officer, Army)

c. Isolation and disconnection

The problems some S/Ps reported in building social connections and accessing support after accompanied postings could result in feelings of isolation and loneliness despite the community around them. The restricted ways in which S/Ps reported they were able to participate in the military community led to some women feeling excluded from the military community. Perceived differences between the cultures of military and civilian communities following the transition of personnel out of Service were described as contributing to a sense of distance between S/Ps and civilian society.

Reported difficulties in accessing support within the military community were described as contributing to feelings of vulnerability and isolation for those who were unable to build social connections as quickly as other S/Ps following accompanied postings.

"…I'm not really a neighbourer so I wouldn't go in into [neighbours] house and sit chatting… that wasn't really my thing… when we lived in [Europe] I remember going to the bus stop in the morning to drop the children off at the bus stop… I would walk back into the flat and I'd think… I'm on my own here all day… oh I used to feel really lonely then." Janet, 40s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

Other women explained how their feelings of isolation stemmed from pre-emptive concerns about a lack of support during times of crisis. Gina's lack of close friends meant she was felt unsure of who would be able to support her during potential hardships and she often felt alone because of this lack of close social support. However, Gina's loneliness was something she had come to accept as part of military life as a S/P and an issue that she had to work through on her own.

"… I do feel a little bit alone because thankfully we've never had any major upsets happen to us so it's hasn't… you do wonder who you could count on if anything happened… I feel quite alone a lot of the time… you think 'Oh well you've gotta [get] on with it'. And of course you do". Gina, 30s (NCO, RAF)

Women described how employment and the absence of children prevented them from participating in social activities intended to generate cohesion and community among S/Ps. As a result, some women perceived there was no appropriate social space for them to contribute to or belong in the community in the same way as women who were able to attend such activities.

"… it was hard in our first posting. Cause I didn't have children and all the people around me did, and I was at work all the time, and so I never really saw anyone. And I couldn't… I didn't really have any conversation that was relevant… I felt quite excluded." Toni, 40s (officer, RAF)

The perception that there were limited spaces in which women who were not stay-at-home-mothers and resulting isolation was also described by other women in similar situations.

"…if you haven't got… a baby or whatever that you can go to group with… [then] you do miss out on a lot… the job that I do requires me to work at school and outside of school… that does isolate me somewhat..." Courtney, 30s (NCO, RAF)

This did not necessarily mean that women who were able to attend such events found them to be inclusive and welcoming. Some women described the cliques they encountered in during such events and how these contributed to feelings of isolation and disconnection when attempting to access the available support within the community. Such experiences were described as having long term consequences on how women viewed the inclusiveness of the military community.

> *"…[they] sit in [their]… secure little shell… 'I'm ok, I've got my friends in this little group here. I don't need to go and talk to that person over there'. Not realising actually that you need to reach out… it's difficult I think to walk into a room of people where other people know each other… I've been that person that is absolutely terrified of opening the door, not knowing what you're going to be received by."* Molly, 40s (NCO, Army)

As with family relations, accompanied postings could lead to feelings of disconnection and estrangement from the friendship networks S/Ps were previously active members of. Perceptions of missing out on special occasions and passive exclusion of S/Ps from their friend's daily lives could lead to feelings of jealousy towards the remaining members of these networks, potentially damaging relationships.

> *"… I really felt I was missing out because I've got a really strong friendship group with the girls that I went to school with… I always felt I was missing out…on special occasions and day to day lives… you're kind of out of sight, out of mind a bit… Jealous really that they were still all able to get on with you know things as they had always been."* Mary, 30s (NCO, Army, transitioned)

After leaving Service, the adjustment to living amongst civilian could take time not only for their husbands but for women as well. Part of this adjustment included adapting to perceived cultural difference between civilians and ex-Service families that could make building connections with civilians more difficult, even some years after leaving Service.

> *"… there is definitely a certain culture amongst Army wives. Which sounds really cliquey and horrible, but there is a certain something about it. I don't know whether it's the humour, whether it's the independence or what it is, but I have not found it with people here. And I'm not quite sure how to. I've tried…"* Carrie, 50s (officer, Army, transitioned)

Summary

This section described how accompanied postings and the transition process affect the social networks of S/Ps and how these experiences influenced S/Ps well-being.

Women described how the imposition of an assigned position within the military hierarchy limited their social connections because of suspicions about the motives of other S/Ps or concerns about sharing sensitive information. S/Ps who resisted this identity explained how they self-exclude from the community, seeking out non-military friends in order to re-establish an identity separate to that of their husband's. Support within the community was reported to generate a sense of belonging among S/Ps and created a surrogate family for women far from home. Those that developed particular strong relationships described the grief and loss they experienced when leaving postings. Reported difficulties in building social connections and accessing support after accompanied postings left women feeling isolated despite the community around them. Some women explained how a fear of burdening other women or appearing weak meant they were reluctant about seeking help from other women in the community. Perceptions of cultural differences between military and civilian communities following the transition out of Service contributed to a sense of distance between women and civilian society.

Chapter 13 – Qualitative summary

- The qualitative study described the employment, family, social networks experiences of S/Ps during accompanied postings and their relationship with the military institution. How these influenced the well-being of S/Ps was explored.
- Women described how accompanied postings limited their employment opportunities, disrupted social networks and outlined the demands they experienced from the military institution and community.
- Restrictions to perceived agency in relation to employment and family life were described by women as leading to resentment towards their husband because of the concessions they were required to make to their employment and the sacrifices they made to their identity as mothers.
- As they moved between and into postings, S/Ps described the social roles they were ascribed from within the military community and their incorporation into the hierarchical structure of the military according to their husband's rank and position. Women described how the policies and procedures of the military institution bonded them to their husband, re-affirming their identity as a military wife.
- Women described how they sought to negotiate, resist or accept the imposition of these identities in balance with or opposition to the competing demands and expectations of their roles as workers, mothers and family members. These ascribed identities were reported to restrict the social connections available to S/Ps from within the community.
- The negative influences of accompanied postings on the identity and agency of S/Ps were reported to be mitigated by the sense of connectedness and belonging women experienced from other S/Ps. Women described their isolation, disconnection and grief when such connections were lost or weakened as women moved away from friends and family or if they were unable to access the military community.

Chapter 14 – Discussion

The main aim of this thesis was to explore the mental health and well-being of spouses and partners (S/Ps) of UK Service personnel. This aim was comprised of four objectives addressed using a mixed methods approach: quantitative methodologies were used to examine the socio-demographic and military profile of the sample (objective 1) and to estimate the prevalence of, and factors associated with, employment, mental health, alcohol misuse and marital satisfaction among S/Ps (objectives 2 and 3) using survey data from 405 S/Ps with children. Qualitative methodologies were used to explore the influence of accompanied postings on S/P well-being via interviews with 19 S/Ps of current and former Service personnel (objective 4). This chapter provides an integrated discussion of the key findings of these objectives within the context of the wider literature.

I begin by discussing the prevalence of mental health and well-being of S/Ps compared to women in the general population and studies of S/Ps from the international literature. Using the Dahlgren and Whitehead model of health (Dahlgren and Whitehead 2007) as a framework, I address how the wider cultural environment of the military and the social and community networks of S/Ps influence their mental health and well-being and draw on self-determination theory to describe differences in how women may be affected. I conclude by summarising the strengths and limitations of this thesis and discussing the implications of this research for policy and service providers. Areas for future research are highlighted.

Key findings

- The quantitative findings indicated that the mental health and well-being of S/Ps was poorer compared to women in the general population, with an increased prevalence of probable depression, hazardous alcohol consumption and mental health comorbidities and a lower prevalence of relationship happiness.
- The prevalence of employment among S/Ps was similar to women in the general population; however S/Ps were more likely to work in occupations requiring intermediate skill levels (for example, administrative work) and less likely to work in routine and manual jobs (for example, checkout assistants).
- Associations with S/P socio-demographics or Service personnel military characteristics suggested wider institutional factors such as Service, rank, location and family separation were associated with the mental health and well-being of S/Ps.
- S/P probable depression, probable PTSD and alcohol misuse were not associated with Service personnel probable depression, probable PTSD or alcohol misuse respectively.

- S/P marital satisfaction was significantly associated with S/P PTSD and Service personnel marital satisfaction, Service personnel rank and S/P age.
- Qualitative findings illustrated how accompanied postings limited the employment and career opportunities available to many S/Ps, disrupted their social networks and family lives, and restricted their perceived agency. Differences in how these experiences influenced women depended on their descriptions of their perceived intrinsic or extrinsic motivations regarding employment and their children's education.
- The concessions S/Ps were required to make, not only to their employment and careers but to their identity as mothers, were described as giving rise to resentment towards their husband and the military institution because of perceived restrictions to personal agency.
- Women described expectations to undertake particular social roles in the military community and how performing these tasks facilitated their incorporation into the hierarchical structure of the military according to their husband's rank. Women explained how they sought to negotiate or resist the imposition of such identities in relation to the competing demands and expectations from their roles as workers, mothers and family members.
- The negative influences of restricted agency and enforced identities on well-being could be mitigated by the sense of connectedness and belonging women experienced from other S/Ps, although isolation, disconnection and grief were described when such connections were lost or weakened as women moved away from friends, other S/Ps and family.

The mental health and well-being of spouses/partners

The main objectives of this thesis were to examine the prevalence of employment, mental health, alcohol misuse and marital satisfaction among S/Ps and to determine which socio-demographic and military factors were associated with these outcomes (objectives 2 and 3).

Employment

As outlined in Chapter 2 (p28), military life, including the frequent moves experienced by military families, can limit the career and employment opportunities of S/Ps (Harrison and Laliberte 1994, Burrell 2006b, Runge, Waller et al. 2014), with their career secondary to that of Service personnel (Russo, Dougherty et al. 2000). How women manage these challenges can influence their well-being, with poorer mental health associated with unemployment and dissatisfaction with employment (Murphy and Athanasou 1999, Faragher, Cass et al. 2005).

Despite the difficulties S/Ps described in seeking or maintaining employment because of accompanied postings in the qualitative study, the prevalence of employment outside the home among S/Ps of currently serving personnel was not statistically significantly different from comparable women in the general UK population (64.2% vs. 62.0%). As found in studies of S/Ps in Canada and Israel (Dunn, Urban et al. 2010, Eran-Jona 2011), obtaining employment does not appear to be as problematic for UK S/Ps as it does for those in the US, where the prevalence of employment tends to be significantly lower among S/Ps than women in the general population (Lim and Schulker 2010, Heaton and Krull 2012, Hosek and Wadsworth 2013, Meadows, Griffin et al. 2015). Employment was, however, significantly higher for S/Ps of reserve (82.8%) and ex-Service personnel (80.4%) compared to women in the general population (62.0%). This suggests possible under-participation of S/Ps of currently serving regular personnel in the workforce, with the decreased mobility of reservist families and reduction in barriers to employment after personnel transition out of Service, such as childcare or improved skills and experience, improving employment outcomes among these S/Ps.

Comparable rates of employment do not necessarily mean that finding and maintaining work was easy for S/Ps. While the similar prevalence of employment in managerial and professional occupations between S/Ps and comparable women in the general population (34.4% vs 30.9%) indicated that maintaining professional careers was achievable for S/Ps, the jobs within this category tended to be focused in certain areas such as teaching or nursing that may be more adaptable to the mobility of Service life; in the qualitative study, women described how having experience or qualifications in certain occupations such as teaching or childcare assisted with finding work following accompanied postings. The concentration of S/Ps into particular occupational areas is similar to US studies that found S/Ps tended to work in retail, child care or not-for-profit organisations that are likely to be easier to manage with their husband's absence and to find following accompanied postings (Harrell, Lim et al. 2004, Blue Star Families 2013, Blue Star Families 2014). Such occupations have been associated with an increased probability of employment among S/Ps (Schwartz, Wood et al. 1990).

The difficulties S/Ps were required to negotiate in order to obtain employment within their military context were indicated by the significantly higher proportion of S/Ps employed in intermediate roles (e.g. administration, secretarial work and teaching and nursing assistant positions) compared to similar women in the general population in the quantitative study (40.8% vs.27.4%). Such positions may be easier to obtain following frequent postings or, as described by women in the qualitative study, more amenable to S/Ps needing to balance employment with family life and their role as the primary caregiver due to the frequent

absence of their husband. However, despite these difficulties, S/Ps were significantly less likely to be employed in routine or manual work (for example, checkout assistants) than similar women in the general population, potentially indicating a level of higher skill and experience among this population.

Mental health and alcohol misuse

The use of different participant groups, response rates and measurement criteria by various studies in the literature review resulted in mixed evidence regarding the prevalence of depression or PTSD among S/Ps (Chapter 2, p34). There were few estimates of alcohol misuse or marital satisfaction. Given these gaps, obtaining validated estimates of these outcomes for researchers, charities and services focused on UK S/Ps, and in terms of the wider literature, was a major objective of this thesis.

Probable depression and PTSD

The prevalence of probable depression was significantly higher among S/Ps than among comparable women in the general English population (7.2% vs. 3.2% respectively). However, this estimate among UK S/Ps was lower than estimates among US S/Ps using the PHQ-9, which ranged from 12.2 to 43.7% (Eaton, Hoge et al. 2008, Warner, Appenzeller et al. 2009, Erbes, Meis et al. 2012a). This is perhaps not surprising given that the data used in this thesis was not collected during or close to periods of Service personnel deployment as it was for the US studies and therefore does not reflect the heightened stress and worry for S/Ps during this time (Burton, Farley et al. 2009, Allen, Rhoades et al. 2011). While UK Service personnel were deployed during the time of data collection for the Children of Military Father's study, preliminary analyses found few Service personnel had been deployed during or near the time of data collection from S/Ps.

While the prevalence of probable depression was low, nearly 80% of S/Ps who met criteria endorsed at least some level of functional or social impairment because of their depression symptoms, highlighting the impact depression has on the lives of those with this condition. Research from general population studies has indicated that the impairment experienced by people with depression is equal or worse to the impairment experienced by people with chronic physical illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension and heart failure (Hays, Wells et al. 1995). Such is the importance of this outcome that it has been suggested practitioners and researchers within mental health increase their focus on function as well as symptomology among people with this condition in order to improve treatment (McKnight and Kashdan 2009).

Although somewhat higher, there was no significant difference in the prevalence of probable PTSD among S/Ps compared to similar women in the general population (6.4% vs. 4.1% respectively) and as with probable depression, the prevalence among UK S/Ps was lower than estimates of 12.5-30.5% seen among studies of US S/Ps (using the same PCL-C score cut-off (≥44)) (Renshaw, Rodrigues et al. 2008, Renshaw, Allen et al. 2011). US and Israeli studies have suggested that PTSD may be transferred between Service personnel and family members due to the close nature of intimate relationships between military couples (Dirkzwager, Bramsen et al. 2005, Frančišković, Stevanović et al. 2007, Solomon, Dekel et al. 2009, Lambert, Engh et al. 2012). However, the evidence remains contentious and further research has suggested the phenomenon is a related, but distinct, form of psychological distress or emotional burden (Ben Arzi, Solomon et al. 2000, Manguno-Mire, Sautter et al. 2007, Caska and Renshaw 2011, Renshaw, Allen et al. 2011). Although Service personnel were recruited into the Children of Military Fathers' study according to their PCL-C scores, there was only a small correlation between the PCL-C scores of S/Ps and Service personnel ($r=0.17$, $p<0.05$) and no significant association between the probable PTSD caseness of S/Ps and Service personnel they were in a relationship with. Overall, these results suggest there was no evidence for secondary traumatisation among this sample. S/P trauma and PTSD should be examined as separate and independent to Service personnel combat-related PTSD until otherwise confirmed in future studies.

Alcohol misuse

Alcohol consumption among men has been shown to have a greater influence on consumption by their female partners than the reverse relationship (Demers, Bisson et al. 1999, Leonard and Mudar 2003). Despite widespread alcohol misuse among UK Service personnel however (Fear, Iversen et al. 2007, Henderson, Langston et al. 2009), there was no significant difference in the prevalence of S/P alcohol misuse based on AUDIT scores (≥8) compared to similar women in the general population (15.4% vs. 13.8%). However, hazardous alcohol consumption, relating to the quantity of alcohol use, was significantly higher among S/Ps than similar women in the general English population (78.4% vs. 59.6%).[10] Further analyses indicated S/Ps consumed a significantly higher number of standard drinks when they did drink (54.4% vs 36.8%) and were significantly more likely to binge-drink (74.7% vs 54.0%) than women in the general English population. Similar patterns of excess alcohol misuse and hazardous alcohol consumption among S/Ps were evident when compared to women in the

[10] Meeting the criteria for this subscale did not require a high level of endorsement of relevant AUDIT items (a score of more than 0 on items 2 "typical drinking session=3-4 drinks" and 3 "binge-drinking"=≥less than monthly)

general Scottish population, the country with the highest consumption in the UK (Gray and Leyland 2015). These differences may illustrate a transfer of cultural norms regarding alcohol from Service personnel, particularly given the more permissive attitude to alcohol in the military and access to subsidised or cheap alcohol (House of Commons Welsh Affairs Select Committee 2013).

It should be noted that the sample used in this thesis was largely comprised of married, older S/Ps, all of whom had children. US studies have suggested that younger S/Ps without children are more likely to misuse alcohol than older S/Ps who are parents (Blow, Gorman et al. 2013). Similar differences in alcohol use by age have been reported among UK women (McManus, Meltzer et al. 2009), although there were no differences in alcohol use by parental status (Office for National Statistics 2016). Estimates of alcohol misuse or hazardous alcohol consumption may have been higher if S/Ps at greater risk of misuse, such as those under 25 years of age, had been included in the quantitative sample.

Unlike probable depression and PTSD, the prevalence of alcohol misuse (AUDIT ≥8) (15.4% vs 3.0-10.7%) (Gorman, Blow et al. 2011, Erbes, Meis et al. 2012a, Blow, Gorman et al. 2013) and binge-drinking (74.7% vs 24.8%) (Padden, Connors et al. 2011) were higher among UK S/Ps than among US S/Ps.[11] A recent study found 23.3% of US S/Ps met AUDIT-C[12] criteria for alcohol misuse (Lester, Aralis et al. 2016), higher than the estimate reported in this thesis. However, the sample used by Lester et al included both male and female S/Ps, of which approximately 14% reported previous experience of military service; 10% were currently serving. Given the higher rates of alcohol misuse seen among US Service personnel (Thomas, Wilk et al. 2010), the prevalence reported by Lester et al is less likely to be comparable to studies comprised of female S/Ps only. The differences between estimates of alcohol misuse among US and UK S/Ps were large and may reflect wider cultural differences in attitudes towards alcohol as evidenced by the lower per capita alcohol consumption in the US compared to the UK (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2010). It may therefore be more appropriate to compare alcohol use among UK S/Ps to S/Ps from countries with a similar level of per capita consumption, such as Australia, Canada or the Netherlands.

[11] This thesis used cut-off of ≥6 units per session compared to ≥5 units per session used by Padden et al. All US studies were conducted immediately prior to, or following, deployment of Service personnel.

[12] AUDIT-C has been shown to perform as well as the full AUDIT, see *Bradley, K., A. DeBenedetti, R. Volk, E. Williams, D. Frank and K. DR. (2007). "AUDIT-C as a brief screen for alcohol misuse in primary care." Alcoholism, clinical and experimental research 31(7): 1208-1217.*

Marital satisfaction

Marital satisfaction is an important contributor to mental health and well-being, with relationship quality associated with depression, PTSD and psychological stress in women in the general population (Fincham, Beach et al. 1997a, Whisman 1999, Papp and Witt 2010). The negative effects of marital satisfaction on mental health and well-being may be heightened among couples who experience frequent stressors because of military life, including increased separations, overseas postings, intense training schedules and deployment (Lester, Peterson et al. 2010, Blakely, Hennessy et al. 2012c, Padden and Posey 2013). These relationships do not occur in isolation, with both direct and indirect effects of marital dissatisfaction on the behavioural outcomes of children (Harrist and Ainslie 1998, Henderson and Horne 2003, Papp, Cummings et al. 2004, Lucas-Thompson and Clarke-Stewart 2007, Garriga and Kiernan 2014).

Nearly a third of S/Ps (30.8%) met criteria for marital distress and S/Ps were significantly more likely to endorse being unhappy in their current relationship compared to women in the general population. Compared to the international literature, this estimate was higher than the 16-19% meeting criteria for marital satisfaction among US and Dutch S/Ps (Dirkzwager, Bramsen et al. 2005, Renshaw, Rodrigues et al. 2008) and more comparable to the 38% of treatment-seeking US S/Ps who met criteria while taking part in a relationship education programme (Bergmann, Renshaw et al. 2014a). This increased prevalence may reflect the stresses that military life can place on relationships: a similar proportion of UK S/Ps (31%) reported their relationship was one of the factors that made them feel negative about being a S/P (Ministry of Defence 2014a).

Influences on the mental health and well-being of spouses/partners

Overall, these findings suggest that the mental health and well-being of S/Ps was poorer in comparison to women in the general population; mental health comorbidities were also higher than S/Ps. To examine what factors may explain these differences, the influence of two layers outlined in the Dahlgren and Whitehead model (Dahlgren and Whitehead 2007) were explored; the cultural environment S/Ps live within and their social connections. Data from both the quantitative and qualitative studies was used to explore the influence of the military on the mental health and well-being of S/Ps (objectives 2-4).

Military influences of S/P mental health and well-being

Within the Dahlgren and Whitehead model (Dahlgren and Whitehead 2007), the cultural environment forms the outermost layer of influence on the health and well-being of individuals. For S/Ps, this cultural environment is constructed not only from the norms and

values of UK society that women married to civilians experience but from the unique culture and lifestyle of the military with its own specific norms and expectations (Enloe 2000). As discussed by Knobloch and Wehrman, this overriding military context is important to fully understand the experiences of military families but is not often considered within studies of this population (Knobloch and Wehrman 2014).

The influence of the military on the mental health and well-being of S/Ps is complicated by the reliance of the latter on a masculine "warrior" stereotype that draws heavily on the male-female dichotomy (Harrison and Laliberte 1997). Through the expectations to provide a range of gendered, informal support services and roles within the community, S/Ps face attempts to incorporate them into their husband career and, therefore, into the military hierarchy and culture. However, at the same time they are kept separate and at arm's length from the military (Enloe 2000). Permission to perform these roles is determined by military policies and procedures that seek to create a supportive community (Horn 2010), allowing the military to limit or pre-empt S/P demands on Service personnel during training or deployment by providing a surrogate source of emotional and instrumental support for S/Ps in the absence of family members.

Deployment, combat and family separation

None of the S/P socio-demographics or Service personnel military factors examined in this thesis were significantly associated with probable depression or PTSD measure scores, although some were approaching significance. This may have been due to the low number of cases. In regards to Service personnel experiences of combat roles and deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan, the lack of association may reflect the time differential between these events and data collection, particularly as the literature indicates S/P outcomes are related to Service personnel military experiences (Glisson, Melton et al. 1980, Lester, Peterson et al. 2010, Hoyt and Renshaw 2013, Andres 2014, Karney and Trail 2016). Because of these null findings, it was not possible to make conclusions using the quantitative data within this thesis as to what may be explain the increased prevalence of probable depression among S/Ps compared to women in the general population beyond exposure to the military.

Alcohol use among S/Ps was associated with family separation from Service personnel, with a significantly higher prevalence of S/Ps meeting criteria for alcohol misuse if Service personnel reported being away from their children (and therefore S/P) for longer than two months in the last 2 years; an association approaching significance was also found for hazardous alcohol consumption. Given the increased use of alcohol during times of excess stress (Keyes,

Hatzenbuehler et al. 2011), this finding suggested poor resilience among S/Ps as a result of their husband's absence. Research has suggested it is the total time separated rather than deployment that is important in S/P depression (Rodriguez and Margolin 2015) and a similar mechanism may explain the higher prevalence of alcohol use among UK S/Ps experiencing the same event. However, this finding is in contrast with US research which found few S/Ps used negative coping behaviours such as alcohol during deployment-related separations (Blank, Adams et al. 2012). As previously discussed, differences in alcohol use between US and UK S/Ps may be explained by wider cultural differences in alcohol use, with UK S/Ps perhaps more likely to use alcohol as a coping mechanism.

Accompanied postings

The main focus of the qualitative study were the experiences of S/Ps during accompanied postings and their relationship with the military institution and how these influenced their well-being (objective 4). The discussion of the qualitative findings forms the majority of the following section, however aspects of accompanied postings were explored within the quantitative data in relation to the geographical location S/Ps resided in. While it cannot be confirmed that the current location of S/Ps is the result of accompanied postings, this assumption is supported by previous research that highlights the role geographical location plays in the some of the outcomes of S/Ps (Chapter 2, p52).

Employment

Despite the benefits employment can have on the self-esteem, physical and mental health of working women and S/Ps (Ross and Mirowsky 1995, Russo, Dougherty et al. 2000, Klumb and Lampert 2004), the qualitative study highlighted several issues S/Ps may face when seeking employment and attempting to maintain their careers across accompanied postings. Posting duration and location and the match between the skills and experience of S/Ps and the local labour market were all described by S/Ps as facilitators and barriers to employment and are similar to findings reported elsewhere (Castaneda and Harrell 2008, Dursun and Sudom 2009, Eran-Jona 2011, Miller, Meadows et al. 2011, Army Families Federation 2012, Army Families Federation 2014).

Childcare was the most commonly reported facilitator and barrier to S/P employment in the qualitative study. While women married to civilians experience similar issues regarding the impact of children on working hours and income (Cohen and Bianchi 1999, Joshi 2002, Paull 2006), the imbalance between work and family is heightened among S/Ps due to the frequent absence of their husband and the distance from social and kin networks that could provide

informal childcare. These issues are a universal problem among S/Ps (Castaneda and Harrell 2008, Dursun and Sudom 2009, Blue Star Families 2013, Blue Star Families 2014, Maury and Stone 2014) and difficult to resolve without improvement and investment in family services and family-centred military policies. However, doing so could be beneficial to the military as S/Ps who are more satisfied with military life and the ability to pursue their desired career or employment are more likely to support personnel remaining in Service (Jolly 1987, Scarville 1990, Lakhani and Hoover 1997). Women in the qualitative study described the difficulties they experienced in balancing their desire to work against their identities and responsibilities as mothers and explained how the perception they were failing in their maternal duties resulted in feelings of guilt and distress. Studies have shown women in the general population who experience doubts about their role as a mother, especially if employed in unrewarding work, are at greater risk of depression (Brown and Bifulco 1990).

Motivations for working varied among the women interviewed as part of the qualitative study. Some women in professional careers described how they were intent on working because of the meaning it provided in terms of re-establishing an identity separate to that of military wife or mother but faced difficulties with planning or progressing their careers because of the frequency of accompanied postings. Other women reported how they were motivated by the sense of purpose, self-confidence and affirmation of value they obtained through work, which were also commonly cited reasons for working among US S/Ps (Peterson 2002, Castaneda and Harrell 2008, Maury and Stone 2014). For both groups of women, the compromises and sacrifices to their own careers they were required to make in order to fulfil their role as a "good" military wife (Enloe 2000) were difficult to balance against the centrality of employment to their identity construction (Bothma, Lloyd et al. 2015). These S/Ps described how the perceived lack of agency regarding their employment opportunities resulted in low self-esteem and a sense of purposelessness, which have been associated with poorer mental health among the general population (Sowislo and Ulrich 2013).

Among some participants of the qualitative study, the loss of their employment was described as a loss of status. This applied whether accompanied postings were overseas or in the UK. S/Ps relinquished not only the perceived social value they held as a result of their occupation but also the perceived equality between their career and that of their husband. This sense of a loss of status due to a suspended or halted career were also described by S/Ps on overseas postings (Jervis 2011, Blakely, Hennessy et al. 2014b) and women within expatriate communities accompanying their husbands (Cieri , Dowling et al. 1991). While this is an experience many women encounter in order to raise a family, for women in the general

population this loss may be more temporary if they are able to return to their job following maternity leave. S/Ps in the qualitative study discussed how accompanied postings sometimes occurred during their maternity leave and that they were required to give up jobs they were intending to return to. The sense of financial independence that women gained from employment was described as another loss related to accompanied postings. This loss was not related to finances as such, but to a sense of ownership, achievement and pride women gained from earning their own money and contributing to the family. For these women, the loss of their income was difficult to adjust to, given the symbolic independence it gives women (Malone, Stewart et al. 2010) and their increased reliance on their husband.

It is important to bear in mind that current unemployment did not necessarily mean women were unhappy with their situation. S/P well-being has been shown to improve with greater satisfaction with their daily role, regardless of whether that is as a stay at home parent or as an employee (Rosen, Ickovics et al. 1990). Social conventions for women to take on the majority of childcare duties were reflected by the high prevalence of US S/Ps who reported that they were not in the labour force in the employment literature review (Chapter 2, p28). Caring for children was one of the main reasons given by US S/Ps for not currently working or looking for work (Harrell, Lim et al. 2004, Blue Star Families 2014, Maury and Stone 2014) and having children was associated with lower dissatisfaction with employment opportunities among US S/Ps (Cooney, Segal et al. 2009) as S/Ps opt to stay at home rather than search for employment within limited or competitive labour markets. For some of the women in the qualitative study, the influence of the concessions and difficulties they described in relation to employment were mitigated by their decision to prioritise having a family. These women expressed little or no motivation to seek employment as their current role as a mother provided them with a strong, alternative source of identity to that of worker.

In addition to the frequency of accompanied postings, the employment problems of S/Ps can be exacerbated by moving to military bases in areas of low employment. Despite most S/Ps of currently serving personnel living in urbanised areas where employment opportunities were likely to be higher, no association with residence was found, demonstrating that, at least when military families were based in England, there was little impact on the ability of S/Ps to seek out and obtain employment. However, S/Ps of currently serving personnel who reported living near to or on military bases were significantly more likely to not be working outside the home than those living away from bases after adjusting for S/P age. The possible explanations for this include employers who may be unwilling to invest in employees who are considered to be highly mobile (Harrison and Laliberte 1994), a lack of affordable and available childcare,

reduced or disrupted access to transport and the frequent absence of their partner for training, deployment or other military responsibilities (Russo, Dougherty et al. 2000). Competition for scarce jobs from other S/Ps or perceived under-employment due to poor local labour conditions as described by women in the qualitative study and in prior research (Harrell, Lim et al. 2004) may also play a role.

The cumulative effect of the employment issues women described in the qualitative study – for example, the frequency of postings, accessing childcare, skills and experience and posting location – was evident in the lower prevalence of employment outside the home among S/Ps of Army personnel compared to other Service branches. Given the greater proportion of reported accompanied postings among Army families in the previous 12 months compared to other Services (Ministry of Defence 2015), this finding was not surprising and was comparable with the literature (Harrell, Lim et al. 2004, Lim, Golinelli et al. 2007, Cooney, Segal et al. 2009, Military One Source 2014, Ministry of Defence 2014a, Ministry of Defence 2014b).

Alcohol misuse and marital satisfaction

Findings from the quantitative study suggested that alcohol consumption and marital satisfaction were also influenced by aspects of accompanied postings. A significantly higher prevalence of alcohol misuse was found among S/Ps living in rural areas compared to those living in urban areas (23.5% vs. 11.0%), suggesting that S/Ps residing in rural areas, even if they have lived there for some time, may be at greater risk of poor health behaviours than those living in urban areas. Findings from the literature on the UK general population suggests a similar association for alcohol consumption between women residing in rural and urban areas however, the difference was smaller than that found in this thesis (39% vs. 32% respectively) (Office for National Statistics 2011b). With rural residence among S/Ps associated with proximity to the military community (Table 35, Appendix 2), this relationship may be explained by increased social isolation and maladaptive coping among S/Ps in rural areas who are unable to access support from family or friends due greater physical distances and the transport requirements involved; Henning found US S/Ps commonly reported consuming alcohol alone (Henning 1986).

The high prevalence of S/P marital distress found in the quantitative section of this thesis may be explained, at least in part, by the frustrations S/P expressed regarding accompanied postings. Geographical mobility has been found to be associated with significantly lower marital satisfaction and satisfaction with Army life among Greek S/Ps (Bellou and Gkousgkounis 2015) and 40.1% of German S/Ps reported tensions in their relationship as a

result of their last accompanied posting (Ebenrett 2002). Jervis described resentment within the military community as a result of overseas postings, but this was focused towards the military as an institution rather than towards Service personnel (Jervis 2011). In the qualitative study, women described the resentment they felt towards their husband because of their perceived lack of agency and control within the military context and the concessions they were required to make, not only in in finding employment or maintaining a career, but also in relation to their family life and social networks. With autonomy associated with greater commitment, satisfaction, intimacy, and vitality within relationships (Gaine and La Guardia 2009), the lack of agency S/Ps can experience as a result of military life may result in lower satisfaction and reduce the motivations of women to remain in relationships with Service personnel if the inability to have mastery of their lives takes precedence over the benefits they receive from their husband's career. Such perceptions were expressed largely by women who didn't feel there was recourse in which to address their frustrations or those who felt they had made disproportionate sacrifices as a result of accompanied postings. Perceived sacrifice is a mediator of marital satisfaction, with greater marital adjustment among women who report satisfaction with the sacrifices they have made (Stanley, Whitton et al. 2006).

Rank

The position of Service personnel in the military hierarchy was associated with S/P employment and marital satisfaction in the quantitative study. The expected roles S/Ps performed and their incorporation of S/Ps into their husband's position in the military community influenced S/P mental health and well-being in both the quantitative and qualitative studies.

Employment

No significant difference was found regarding Service personnel rank and S/P employment. However, compared to S/Ps of officers, S/Ps of NCO or other ranked personnel were significantly less likely to work in managerial and professional occupations and significantly more likely to work in lower skilled routine and manual jobs. There are two possible explanations for this. The first is that the association with rank may reflect differences in S/P education. If officers marry women of a similar social class, they may also be more likely to also have higher educational qualifications and therefore be more likely to work in professional or skilled occupations. S/Ps of lower ranked personnel on the other hand, may have lower education and work in lower skilled employment. The second possibility is related to Service personnel income. S/P employment benefits the financial well-being of military families, particularly among ranks with lower incomes (Russo, Dougherty et al. 2000). S/P of lower

ranked Service personnel may be more likely to have to work in order to financially support their families, which, in light of the limited employment opportunities available to S/Ps, may mean taking on routine or manual employment. Within the literature review, S/Ps of officers were more likely to not be in the labour force, reflecting the decreased need for them to contribute to the family finances (Chapter 2, p28).

While the qualitative study found no overall differences by rank regarding the loss of S/P income due to accompanied postings, S/Ps of officers more commonly described the income of Service personnel as sufficient to support the family meaning they were not required to work, while S/Ps of NCO ranked personnel more commonly discussed how postings were financially difficult. These findings suggest that the type of work S/Ps undertake is likely to be influenced by family income depending on Service personnel rank - and thus the need for women to work – and by the opportunities then available to S/Ps that are dependent on their educational qualifications.

Marital satisfaction

Military policies that seek to uphold the traditional nuclear family unit as the mainstay of the community and encourage marriage (Beevor 1990, Lundquist and Xu 2014) may explain the significantly lower marital satisfaction found among S/Ps of Service personnel of NCO or other ranks in the quantitative studies. With Service family accommodation only available to married couples, cohabitation prior to marriage is limited to couples with sufficient economic and social resources. Marriage may also be rushed into prior to Service personnel being posted overseas, particularly among lower ranked personnel (Beevor 1990). While the analyses were somewhat restricted as other variables that may explain this association, such as income or education, were not collected, a similar association between rank and marital satisfaction has been found in UK Service personnel, with officers significantly less likely to report discussing divorce or separation with their wives or partners (Keeling, Wessely et al. 2015). This study found Service personnel educational attainment was not significantly associated with Service personnel marital satisfaction, suggesting other factors may be influential in this outcome among military couples.

Expected roles and incorporation

A prominent experience of women in the qualitative study concerned gendered expectations to perform certain tasks in the community associated with their husband's position. By participating in these roles, women effectively 'assumed rank', especially when Service personnel were posted overseas, deployed or promoted into positions of command, and

became tacitly incorporated into their husband's position and identity in the military hierarchy (Finch 1983, Harrell 2001, Jervis 2011). This process is a demonstration of Papanek's theory of the two-person single career (Papanek 1973), wherein women married to men in particular occupations assume part of his career through the demands his employer makes of his wife or female partner. However, external motivations to participate in these roles arose mostly from other S/Ps within the community, who play an important role in the socialisation of new spouses and partners and the transference of norms regarding culturally approved behaviour (Segal 1986, Horn 2010).

Although incorporation into their husband's rank was discussed by many S/Ps in all four topic areas of the qualitative study, there were mixed effects on S/P well-being, which were in part mediated by S/Ps own self-conception of themselves as 'military' and therefore, their motivations behind performing expected roles. Some women were happy to adopt the identity of 'military wife' and undertake certain tasks and roles as they were motivated to help not only their husband but to contribute towards the organisation and support of the wider military 'family'. S/Ps could also be motivated to participate where such roles were perceived by women to provide a sense of purpose when S/Ps were posted overseas and unable to work. For these women, there was no perceived loss of agency and as such, no negative influence on well-being. However, other women expressed concerns about the appropriateness of reflecting the military hierarchy in social spaces considered to be civilian and were resistant to their incorporation into their husband's rank and position and the perceived loss of their own independent identity. Such women described how they sought to passively avoid the two-person career by obtaining or re-asserting their identity through other means such as employment as previously discussed. Similar findings on resistance or acceptance of incorporation have been reported in prior research on UK S/Ps and wives in the expatriate community (Cieri , Dowling et al. 1991, Jervis 2011, Blakely, Hennessy et al. 2014b) and demonstrate the tensions women often experience between the imposition of a social identity based on their husband's occupation and their desire to accompany him.

The incorporation of S/Ps may be reflected in the significantly higher prevalence of hazardous alcohol consumption among S/Ps of lower ranked personnel compared to S/Ps of officers. Only one other study in the literature reported alcohol use by rank and found the opposite association; levels of consumption among S/Ps increased with increasing Service personnel rank (Johnson, Harsha et al. 1993). It was not clear from the available quantitative data what may explain this association. If it is presumed that rank is a proxy for S/P education or income, this finding is in contrast to general population research that finds greater alcohol

consumption among women with increasing household income (Office for National Statistics 2011b). Instead, the position of S/Ps within the military community and the prevalent expectations and hierarchy between officers and enlisted personnel and their families (Harrell 2001, Hall 2011) may explain this association. Previous research has demonstrated how S/Ps who resisted social norms to adhere to the expectations of being a "good wife" may face social sanction from within the military community (Enloe 2016); censure may not only be applied to S/Ps but also to their husbands through the loss of potential promotions (Harrison and Laliberte 1997, Goldstein 2001). Such patriarchal views within the military appear little changed, with similar experiences reported among UK S/Ps (Higate and Cameron 2004, Jervis 2011) and within the qualitative study of this thesis. S/Ps of senior ranking Service personnel described the normative pressures they experienced on their behaviour as military wives. S/Ps of lower ranked personnel did not describe the same expectations and pressures on behaviour and therefore this group may feel more able to use alcohol freely, even in a way that may be more hazardous for their health.

Social and community networks

The other major layer of influence on the mental health and well-being of S/Ps as outlined in the Dahlgren and Whitehead model were the social and community networks of S/Ps. This included their relationship with their husband/partner and associations between the outcomes of military couples, which was examined using quantitative data (objective 3 and 4), while the support and belonging women experienced from other S/Ps and their social identities as wives, mothers and family members which was explored using qualitative data (objective 4).

Mental health and marital satisfaction within military couples

With data available from both Service personnel and S/Ps, I was interested in examining how the marital satisfaction of S/Ps was affected not only by the marital satisfaction of Service personnel but by the mental health of the couple (objective 3). However, S/P and Service personnel mental health caseness were not significantly associated. This is in contrast with the literature that suggests S/P depression and PTSD are associated with Service personnel depression and PTSD respectively (Solomon, Waysman et al. 1991, Solomon, Waysman et al. 1992, O'Toole, Outram et al. 2010, Klaric, Franciskovic et al. 2012).

General population studies have shown marital satisfaction is associated with the mental health of couple members (Fincham, Beach et al. 1997a, Beach, Katz et al. 2003, Papp and Witt 2010) and similar findings were reported by studies of S/P marital satisfaction in the literature review (Westman, Vinokur et al. 2004, Renshaw, Rodrigues et al. 2008, Klaric, Franciskovic et

al. 2011, Blow, Gorman et al. 2013). The findings of the structural equation model (Chapter 9, p227) indicated that as in the general population literature, marital satisfaction was associated between military couple members (Marchand and Hock 2000, Beach, Katz et al. 2003, Davila, Karney et al. 2003, Lawrence, Pederson et al. 2008). Given Service personnel and S/Ps answered similar items about their relationship, this correlation was to be expected. Further analyses using regression and structural equation models found Service personnel rank (as previously discussed), S/P age and S/P probable PTSD were also significantly associated with S/P marital satisfaction. While marital distress and dissatisfaction was significantly higher among older S/Ps compared to younger women, studies have suggested marital satisfaction may actually be negatively related to relationship duration (Karney and Bradbury 1997, VanLaningham, Johnson et al. 2001, Wendorf, Lucas et al. 2011). With a higher prevalence of marriage among young US and UK Service personnel (Hogan and Furst Seifert 2009, Keeling 2014), S/Ps may experience longer relationships than women in the general population which may contribute to the difference in relationship happiness between these two populations. As no information on length of relationship was collected in the quantitative survey, this could not be examined further. However, within the qualitative study, some women discussed how adapting to the concessions they had made as a result of accompanied postings was becoming increasing difficult to adjust to, suggesting a greater burden from the military lifestyle on women with increasing years of marriage.

Although the literature suggests S/P marital satisfaction is associated with both Service personnel and S/P depression (Westman, Vinokur et al. 2004, Renshaw, Rodrigues et al. 2008, Klaric, Franciskovic et al. 2011, Blow, Gorman et al. 2013), only S/P PTSD measure scores had a significant negative effect on S/P marital satisfaction within the structural equation model. Studies have shown PTSD in wives does not impact necessarily on their ability to provide support for their partners (Hanley, Leifker et al. 2013) but with women providing more of the relationship and emotional skills needed to maintain relationship intimacy (Mirgain and Cordova 2007), relationships in which women are emotionally unable to perform these roles may suffer. Due to the low number of S/Ps meeting criteria for PTSD in the quantitative study, it was not possible to explore what role PTSD clusters such as avoidance and emotional numbing, associated with lower marital satisfaction among S/Ps (Hendrix, Erdmann et al. 1998, Riggs, Byrne et al. 1998, Klaric, Franciskovic et al. 2011, Renshaw, Campbell et al. 2014b), may have played in S/P marital satisfaction in this thesis.

With Service personnel recruited into the Children of Military Fathers' study according to their PTSD scores, one possible explanation for this association is that the model reflects the

increasing combined trauma of military couples and the negative influence this has on marital satisfaction. This was illustrated by Dirkzwager and colleagues who found a dose response relationship between decreasing S/P marital satisfaction and increasing PTSD symptomology among couple members (Dirkzwager, Bramsen et al. 2005). This finding suggests couples with increased PTSD scores may be at greater risk of relationship dissatisfaction, as well as breakdown, even where they do not meet necessarily meet PTSD screening criteria.

The military community

In relying on S/Ps to perform unpaid and gendered labour within the military community, the military can generate cohesion and provide social support for other S/Ps (Harrison and Laliberte 1997), particularly during times of deployment (Hyde 2016). Social support from within the community has been shown to be higher among S/Ps of officers compared to S/Ps of lower ranked personnel (Rosen and Moghadam 1989), possibly because of the expectations and norms women experience. The availability of this social support has been shown to prevent S/P depression and improve psychological well-being (Sudom 2010, Green, Nurius et al. 2013). S/P perceptions of belonging to the military community as a social group has been associated with increased empowerment among women, indirectly improving psychological well-being through improved agency and control (Wang, Nyutu et al. 2015). The community is also of importance to the military, with integration of S/Ps into a cohesive community and perceived availability of military support associated with higher retention of Service personnel (Burrell, Durand et al. 2003, Joseph and Afifi 2010).

Despite the influences on their mental health and well-being as a result of incorporation into their husband's rank, there could be benefits for S/Ps from performing expected roles in the community. The findings from the qualitative study suggest the military community provided access to, and membership of, an important social group where S/Ps could obtain support and identify from, improving their well-being. Perceptions of support were evident among participants, and most S/Ps interviewed looked to the military community for both instrumental support with issues like informal childcare support and emotional support and understanding of the issues of military life. This is supported by a recent survey of the UK military community, which found 74% of Service personnel and S/Ps reported that being part of the military community was what they liked most about living in SFA (Army Families Federation 2016). For many S/Ps, this support contributed to a sense of belonging and place within the community; research has suggested this sense of belonging to a group is a stronger predictor of depression than social support itself (Hagerty, Williams et al. 1992, Hagerty and Williams 1999).

For women who formed these deep social connections within the community, their identification with their social networks was described as extending beyond belonging to a social group to considering other S/Ps and families as an extension of their kinship group. As a result, some S/Ps described grief and loss as a result of having to leave these strong social connections when their husband received a new accompanied posting. Although not a common theme among the S/Ps, similar descriptions of perceived loss and mourning regarding social connections have been reflected in studies of UK S/Ps posted overseas (Jervis 2011, Blakely, Hennessy et al. 2012c).

Military life does not suit all women, some of whom find the insecurity of short-term relationships isolating (Jolly 1987) and studies have suggested that good quality and supportive relationships can be difficult for S/Ps to build and maintain (Finch 1983, Orthner and Rose 2009, Jervis 2011, Padden and Posey 2013). Women who are unable to build connections within the community because of perceived barriers to social support, may be at greater risk of social isolation, stress, psychological distress and mental health problems (Greenblatt, Becerra et al. 1982, Cohen and Wills 1985, Paykel 1994, Dalgard, BjÖÕrk et al. 1995, Olstad, Sexton et al. 2001, Knickmeyer, Sexton et al. 2002, Maulik, Eaton et al. 2010, Padden and Posey 2013). In the qualitative study, women with more reserved personalities described the isolation and loneliness of military life despite the presence of the military community. Other S/Ps reported that some of the friendships and relationships they developed were based on proximity rather than meaningful connections and lead to uncertainty about who they were able to rely on. Some S/Ps described the passive exclusion they experienced within the community as a result of 'cliques' and how this affected how they came to identify with the military community, leading to perceptions of disconnection. Similar perceptions of disconnection and estrangement were expressed by S/Ps in relation to friend and kin networks. With support provided by from family and friends associated with the psychological well-being of S/Ps (Merolla 2010, Skomorovsky 2014), it is important women are able to maintain these connections over the many postings they experience in order to protect well-being among this population.

Women in the qualitative study described feelings of disconnection and restriction to their social connections as a result of their incorporation into their husband's rank and position in the military hierarchy. While the extent to which Service personnel rank is extended to S/Ps has changed over time, it still remains a central means for characterising and organising the military community (Rosen and Moghadam 1989, Drummet, Coleman et al. 2003, Hall 2011) and S/Ps (Harrell 2000, Harrell 2001). Some women described how social norms and military

policies that allocated particular houses to certain ranks entrenched rank distinctions within the community, preventing S/Ps from seeking social support from women married to Service personnel of a different rank. Other S/Ps reported how because of their assigned rank, they had previously been approached by other S/Ps hoping to establish connections that could advance the career of their husband rather than those seeking friendship or support. Such overtures were explained as leading to suspicion and distrust regarding the motives of other S/Ps and some women opted to self-exclude from the military community as a result, seeking social support via friends outside the military community or through employment.

Perceptions of disconnection were expressed by women in the qualitative study who were physically and socially outside of the military community. S/Ps of currently serving personnel who were housed off base due to housing shortages described how their physical separation from the community resulted in them feeling suspended between the two communities, similar to the perceptions of S/Ps experiencing unaccompanied postings expressed regarding their sense of belonging and place (Verey and Fossey 2013). They reported differences in how civilians and military families interacted, as did S/Ps of personnel who had left Service. S/Ps who had experienced this transition described the perceived cultural differences between the military and civilian communities and how this led to feelings of alienation and isolation. Women described missing the “special bond” or camaraderie they experienced with other women in the community, similar to the relationships veterans have described when they leave Service (Ahern, Worthen et al. 2015, Walker 2015). With the adaptation Service personnel undergo to reintegrate into civilian society described as a form of culture shock (Bergman, Burdett et al. 2014b), family members may also experience similar problems with reintegration during transition and additional support may need to be considered for them during this time.

One issue raised by S/Ps was the reliance on events organised by and for S/Ps that centred around daytime events best suited to stay at home parents with young children. Although intended to function as a means for allowing S/Ps to meet and to generate cohesion, some women were unable to attend due to employment or because they did not have children at that time or they did not feel they would fit in. Previous research has found increased family problems associated with accompanied postings among US Army S/Ps who felt disconnected from the military community (McKain 1973) and similar descriptions of anxiety, blame and marital problems were reported by women in the qualitative study who not being able to participate in these social events and felt isolated and separated from the community. S/Ps in the qualitative study described how children were an important means of creating social

connections and networks in the military community and the quantitative results, an increasing number of children was associated with lower marital distress among S/Ps, although this was no longer significant in the structural equation model after accounting for other variables. This is counter to previous research indicating the presence of children negatively affects relationship functioning and satisfaction among the general population (Doss, Rhoades et al. 2009, Mitnick, Heyman et al. 2009, Wendorf, Lucas et al. 2011) and UK Service personnel (Keeling 2014). However, a similar finding has been reported among US S/Ps (Warner, Appenzeller et al. 2009). For S/Ps, the presence of children may represent a way of accessing greater social support from other mothers in the community, alleviating some of the frustrations with military life. Research has shown that the social support S/Ps receive through their role as a mother has been associated with significantly lower deployment related stress among S/Ps with children compared to those without (Van Winkle and Lipari 2015).

Competing identities

As well as balancing their incorporation into the rank and position ascribed to them as a military wife, S/Ps in the qualitative study described their experiences of demands and expectations to tend to roles and expectations that arose from being a mother and part of a wider extended kinship group and how the inability to fulfil these roles as they wished influenced their well-being. Such multiple identities are a representation of identity accumulation theory developed by Thoits (Thoits 1983), which postulates that multiple role identities can influence the psychological and emotional well-being of individuals by providing resources that can be drawn on to reduce or prevent distress. Research using this theory has also suggested that there can be negative effects on health and well-being where roles demands are incompatible (Owens, Robinson et al. 2010).

Women described the concessions they made to their family life by opting to send their children to boarding school and separate the family and the extrinsic motivations they experienced to mitigate the disruptive effects of accompanied postings and provide educational and social stability for their children. However, where women had not internalised and accepted this decision (as outlined within self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci 2000a)), there were tensions between the physical absence of children from the family home and the self- perception some S/Ps had of themselves as ‘good’ mothers. This disparity was reported to result in continual anxiety about their decision and justification of their reasons for separating their family. The confusion and uncertainty some S/Ps experienced in relation to whether or not they were adequately performing the role of mother now their children were no longer physically present in the family home suggests women experienced a form of

ambiguous loss following the decision to send their children to boarding school. Ambiguous loss (Boss 2004) refers to the confusion and ambiguity that can be created about family boundaries and roles due to the separation of family groups. When family members are separated, it can become unclear who is included in a particular family and who is not, with parenting roles postponed and daily tasks or rituals and celebrations altered or cancelled until the absent member returns. As outlined by Boss, such losses can result in poorer psychological well-being if feelings of hopelessness about the absence, as might be experienced by women with a perceived lack of agency in relation to such decisions, lead to depression, guilt or anxiety (Boss 2004). Although primarily used in relation to descriptions of family separation due to deployment, this theory has been applied to families of adolescents who have left home (Boss and Greenberg 1984). Jervis found similar expressions of distress (Jervis 2011) about this decision, although few women discussed it, possibly as on overseas postings this is one of the few options to stabilise their children's education that is available to military families.

Another experience some S/Ps discussed were the family separations they experienced due to unaccompanied postings or transition. While not a major focus of this work, some S/Ps were content to opt for unaccompanied postings for part of their husband's career. Due to the voluntary nature of these postings and their short duration, none of the women who experienced these separations reported negative influences on their well-being. However, S/Ps who described family separation during the transition process discussed the strain of bearing the majority of family responsibilities during their husband's absence and the influence of this on marital tension, similar to the tensions described among UK S/Ps experiencing unaccompanied postings (Verey and Fossey 2013). While some couples were able to adjust once personnel returned to the family home permanently after leaving Service, for others, the constant separation and reintegration caused severe issues. One S/P even contemplated leaving her relationship in order to have more stability for herself and her children. Given the importance of strong relationships in the successful transition of Service personnel (Black and Papile 2010, Ashcroft 2014), such stressors have the potential to negatively impact on the ability of ex-Service personnel to reintegrate into civilian society if couples are not able to manage this turbulence.

Trying to maintain family relationships across accompanied postings that separated families over vast distances was not always easy and could result in tension for S/Ps between their roles as mothers/military wives and kin. Competing demands between mother and family member roles meant the physical distance introduced by accompanied postings were

described as both a physical and emotional barrier to support between family members and S/Ps by women in the qualitative study, particularly during times of crises when greater reciprocal support was needed. Some of the women were aware they may need to take on additional caring roles for elderly relatives but were unclear about whether this was possible under current military policy and how they might manage given the level of mobility they experienced. Although not commonly considered in the literature on military families, this is likely to become an increasingly important issue for the military community, and important given that the perceived failure to fulfil normative caring roles such as caring for elderly parents has been associated with increased depression (Gerstel and Gallagher 1993).

Strengths

There are a number of strengths to this thesis, which provides a robust basis in which to continue research on this population.

- This thesis was the first UK study to examine the mental health and well-being of spouses and partners (S/Ps) of UK Service personnel using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.
- The use of a mixed methods approach in this thesis added greater detail to the quantitative findings, helping to expand understanding of the military context S/Ps live within by exploring the influences of accompanied postings in relation to S/P well-being.
- The prevalence of employment outcomes among S/Ps was examined and the associations with other S/P outcomes explored.
- The prevalence of mental health, alcohol misuse and marital health among S/Ps were estimated using validated measures and compared to women in the general population in order to investigate the impact of military life on S/Ps. Associations with S/P socio-demographic and Service personnel military characteristics were examined, contributing further knowledge to the literature in this area and identifying differences in outcomes among different populations of S/Ps.
- The mental health of S/Ps was taken into account in dyadic analyses of mental health.
- Although different groups of S/Ps were included in the quantitative data (Army, reserve, serving, veteran), the analyses examined potential differences between these groups of S/Ps to identity those with potentially poorer outcomes.
- The response rate for S/Ps in this study was high for a military study (78.0%).
- The inclusion criteria for the qualitative study allowed me to increase the number of participants and improve the validity of the findings by providing sufficient data.

- Participants were recruited from the same source to prevent potential differences arising from using S/Ps recruited through other sources such as through military charities. Such participants may be more connected to the military community and institution and therefore have different experiences.
- The inclusion of S/Ps of ex-Service personnel allowed for the exploration of S/P experiences of transition back into civilian society to be explored, an issue that has not previously received much attention.
- The recruitment issues experienced during the qualitative study resulted in several groups of S/Ps of Service personnel being included; Army and Royal Air Force, officers and NCOs, those still in Service and those who had transitioned out of Service. However, differences between all these groups were explored and described where relevant.
- While other studies of accompanied postings have been conducted, they have focused on overseas postings only. This thesis adds to the literature in this area by exploring similar issues during accompanied postings both overseas and in the UK and addresses some of these previous findings in further detail. Exploration of the relationship between S/Ps and their husbands, children and wider family during accompanied postings provides additional information in this area.
- While well-being was measured retrospectively in the qualitative study, research has shown that how people make sense of their experiences can impact their well-being. Higher levels of well-being have been found among people who reported meeting needs of autonomy (control of behaviours and goals), competence (mastering tasks and gaining new skills) and relatedness (connections with others) during past events (Phillipe, Koestner et al. 2011, Phillipe, Koestner et al. 2012, Waters 2014). These components align not only with the key elements of intrinsic motivation outlined within self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci 2000a) but with broader eudemonic definitions of well-being.
- When considering the quantitative and qualitative findings together, it should be remembered that not all of the S/Ps who participated in the quantitative study had recently experienced an accompanied posting. Instead, the qualitative study was intended to explore some of the findings from the quantitative studies within the context of accompanied postings to highlight how the S/P mental health and well-being might be influenced by this frequent experience of military life.

Limitations

Limitations regarding the quantitative data include:

Study design

Quantitative study

- The cross-sectional study design of the Children of Military Fathers' study means only associations between variables can be assessed and causal relationships cannot be established.
- The method of recruitment, where Service personnel were asked for the contact details of the mothers of their children, may have influenced which women took part in this study. Given the ethical requirements for accessing this study population, this was the most appropriate option available for approaching a sample of S/Ps where non-response could be assessed and used in quantitative analyses.
- Because of the source and structure of the sample used for this PhD, this sample cannot claim to be representative of the wider community of S/Ps. According to estimates obtained under a Freedom of Information request (Head of Defence Statistics (Tri Service) 2014), 44% of regular UK Service personnel are married or in civil partnership - 62% of officers and 40% of other ranks - and 31% of Service personnel have one or more children. Data on other forms of relationships such as cohabitation or couples in a relationship but not living together, or the relationship status of reserve personnel, is not held by the Ministry of Defence and any information on family structure is voluntarily provided by personnel. Given these figures, the sample is likely to be representative of the nearly one third of military couples who are married and have children. However, research from sources independent of the Ministry of Defence have suggested that the prevalence of marriage may be higher (Keeling 2014), indicating the findings may be applicable to a larger section of the military community.
- It should be noted that the quantitative sample includes the S/Ps of both current and former Service personnel as well as women who are no longer in the relationship with members of the UK Armed Forces. This, as well as the reduced number of S/Ps of younger and lower ranked Service personnel, may explain the small proportion of S/Ps reporting that they lived in military accommodation. Such S/Ps are likely to be under-represented in this study.
- The quantitative sample was comprised of data from women with children who are (or have been) in a relationship with current or former Service personnel. Although I have tried to place the findings within the wider literature concerning the outcomes of S/Ps

with and without children, there are likely to be differences that I have not been able to account for such as the additional stressors and social roles S/Ps with children have that come about because of their children that other women will not experience.

Qualitative study

- Participants of the qualitative study were S/Ps of Army and RAF Service personnel of officer and senior non-commissioned officer (NCO) rank and this study provides insight into the experiences of these particular groups. Findings may not be generalizable to other groups of S/Ps.
- Due to time constraints, no second coder was used, which may raise questions about the accuracy of the data analysis and potential researcher bias. However, a supervisor with qualitative experience assisted with the development and checking of the veracity of the first thematic model within the study. Feedback on themes was provided by supervisors and representatives of the Army Families Federation. Both helped to verify the accuracy and veracity of the themes.

Variables

- No information was collected in the Children of Military Fathers' study on family income or S/P education, meaning associations with these variables could not be explored except by using occupational social class as a proxy variable. As a result, it is not clear if differences by rank were a proxy for S/P education or income. The impact of relationship length, which may explain the increase in marital distress with increasing age of S/Ps on marital satisfaction, could not be explored for similar reasons.
- For the purposes of the structural equation model, only couples with matched marital statuses were included in the analyses. This was based on the assumption that couples where both S/Ps and Service personnel reported the same marital status were in a relationship together. No question verifying their current relationship with a serving or former member of the Armed Forces was included in the Children of Military Father's study. The associations found in this model may have decreased in effect size if couples who were not in a relationship were included.

Comparison analyses

- Different measures of probable depression and PTSD were used in the APMS and the thesis sample, raising questions about the comparability of the prevalence estimates between these samples. While the PHQ-9 has been validated against clinical interviews such as that used in the APMS (Gilbody, Richards et al. 2007), the measures used to

assess PTSD in this study and in the APMS (the PCL-C and the TSQ, respectively) have not been examined for comparability. Future research will be able to compare this outcome more thoroughly as the APMS 2014 used the PCL-C.

- Although there were some questions about comparability, the APMS was selected as it contained measures of all the mental health variables of interest at one time point. Other community studies were considered in the initial stages of analysis, such as the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC) (Boyd, Golding et al. 2013) but these were rejected due to a lack of comparable mental health outcomes.
- The creation of the relationship happiness comparison categories between the thesis sample and the Millennium Cohort Study was somewhat arbitrary. Due to a lack of estimates of marital satisfaction among women in the general UK population, this was the only option available in order to gain some form of comparator for the thesis. However, both were 7 point scales completed by respondents using computer-based questionnaires and therefore how respondents judged and completed the item is likely to be similar.
- The use of the KCMHR health and well-being cohort study was intended to situate the sample of S/Ps within the wider military community. As the Children of Military Fathers' study sampled from the cohort study approximately four to five years later, Service personnel S/Ps are or were in a relationship with at the time of the survey had a longer length of Service as personnel became older, had more NCO ranked personnel as personnel advanced through the ranks and a greater number were ex-Service as personnel retired and left Service. With S/Ps of lower rank less likely to be included in the study, this study may be less representative of this group.

Statistical power

- Few associations were found between S/P outcomes and S/P socio-demographics or Service personnel military characteristics. This is not to say that such relationships do not exist given the literature among both women in the general population and S/Ps and there was evidence that some associations were approaching statistical significance (for example, family separation and hazardous alcohol consumption). These associations may have been more evident if there had been more statistical power.
- While similar to other studies in this area, the size of the quantitative study and the low numbers in some categories meant that independent variables and outcomes were largely treated as binary. This may have masked some associations that might have been expected given the prior literature.

- With multiple analyses conducted, it is possible that some of the significant findings are due to chance. However, when considering the results, significance and effect size were considered along with findings from the prior literature to determine whether or not the findings may be in error.

Implications and recommendations

- Employment is a key part of life for many S/Ps and an important part of the identity of some of the women interviewed. While great strides have been made in supporting S/Ps who wish to work, such as through HIVE information networks in the UK and the establishment of careers and enterprise organisations[13] and Recruit for Spouses,[14] as well as the inclusion of S/P employment in the Armed Forces Families' Strategy 2016-2020,[15] additional support should be given to alleviate some of the common issues women experienced as a result of accompanied postings. In particular, efforts should be made to improve military provision of childcare for both Service personnel and S/Ps, with more flexible opening hours to counter the lack of informal care available to S/Ps as a direct result of accompanied postings. Knowledge regarding government programmes for free or subsidised childcare should be publicised. Improved access to training and career planning services would be of benefit to women during accompanied postings and financial support should be developed to allow S/Ps to update their skills and qualifications. Such expressions of support may have wider benefits for the military in improving retention and recruitment of Service personnel, especially among women, as well as improving S/P well-being.
- The higher prevalence of probable depression among S/Ps compared to women in the general population suggests greater need among this population for mental health and well-being services. Primary health care services, both within the military system and the NHS, should seek to raise awareness of depression symptoms among S/Ps and provide services appropriate to this population in order to improve access to therapies for S/Ps and ensure continuity of care across accompanied postings. This would need to consider help-seeking behaviours in this group. Sign-posting women to charities providing support for S/Ps in areas specifically affected by military life, such as the

[13] See www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support/23438.aspx for further information about HIVES. See Forces Enterprise Network (FEN) for further information http://forcesenterprisenetwork.co.uk for the Service community.
[14] www.recruitforspouses.co.uk
[15] See www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-armed-forces-families-strategy for further information.

employment services provided by Recruit for Spouses, may assist women to gain a sense of autonomy and control, potentially leading to improvements in mental health and well-being.

- In order to prevent the development of alcohol misuse and poor health and social outcomes associated with over consumption of alcohol, Service family charities and welfare services should focus on addressing hazardous alcohol consumption among S/Ps through awareness raising and addressing attitudes towards alcohol, and its availability and cost, within the military community.
- The significantly lower levels of relationship happiness among S/Ps compared to women in the general population suggest some military couples may benefit from additional relationship support while personnel are in Service. This may be through the provision of information for those preparing for marriage about the realities of married life in the military or the potential relationship problems that might be experienced during transition out of Service. Models of marital satisfaction may be able to be used to identify couples at greater risk of relationship dissatisfaction and potential breakdown, with increased PTSD among couples of lower rank and increased age potential identifiers of those at increased risk.
- The military community was reported as a key source of support for S/Ps. However, maintaining access to this community was difficult for women who opted for unaccompanied postings or those who were not housed near military bases and women described how this distance led to feelings of disconnection and isolation. Policy makers should consider these findings in relation to the proposed Future Accommodation Model, which suggests changes to the provision of Service family accommodation (SFA),[16] to pre-empt some of the issues S/Ps and families might experience as a result of geographical dispersion.
- With increasing numbers of dual income families, S/Ps running social events within the community and the welfare personnel who assist them should explore other methods of involving S/Ps in the community outside of coffee mornings and activities that centre on young children to improve cohesion and support for different groups of S/Ps.
- Although military family policy is being updated to include the possibility of extended family being permitted to move along with personnel, this should be clarified for current military families.

[16] See www.gov.uk/government/collections/mod-future-accommodation-model for further information.

- S/Ps described issues relating to their experiences of the provision of day-to-day or emotional support by the military, as well as the lack of well-trained welfare personnel. Welfare services should explore additional ways in which to support S/Ps and addressing training and suitability issues of staff, including the professionalization of welfare, in order to improve trust and ensure S/Ps seek support when required.
- Finally, women expressed a desire for greater acknowledgement of the informal roles they play in the military community as well as the sacrifices they make for their husbands' careers. Greater support should be provided for S/Ps transitioning out of Service alongside personnel, particularly where they have previously served or if they have a long-term connection to the military community.

Future research

- Further research should be conducted to explore outcomes among a wider and more representative sample of UK S/Ps, particularly women in a relationship with lower ranked Service personnel and those without children.
- Data on family income, S/P education and length of relationship should be collected in all future studies of this population. This would allow for more in-depth exploration of the possible under-participation of S/Ps in the workforce and the influence this may have on well-being as well as marital satisfaction.
- The higher prevalence of hazardous alcohol misuse among S/Ps of lower ranked personnel is of great interest, not just in relation to health, but how this may be related to the position of S/Ps in the military community. Future research should explore both the prevalence of alcohol misuse in a wider population of S/Ps and, qualitatively, the role of alcohol use by S/Ps in the military community. It should aim to account for cultural differences in alcohol use between countries by encouraging collaborative projects that explore issues such as alcohol misuse among S/Ps across countries.
- Studies to replicate the structural equation model of S/P marital satisfaction and the associations with S/P PTSD measure scores would verify whether the results of this model are applicable only to UK military couples with a higher prevalence of combined trauma or whether they are generalizable to other military couples and those from other countries.
- Future studies should include measures of S/P PTSD that are separate to Service personnel combat-related PTSD and seek to clarify the concept of secondary traumatisation.

- Comparisons with S/Ps of similar occupational groups such as emergency services should be made to explore which particular elements of military life contribute to these adverse outcomes and identify similarities or differences between occupational cultures that are relevant to S/Ps mental health and well-being.
- Longitudinal research that explores how S/Ps experience the military institution from their introduction and socialisation into the military community as a new wife and throughout the following years would be valuable, providing insight into how women negotiate their incorporation into their husband's role and position in the military hierarchy, their transition back into civilian society and the influences on well-being.
- If introduced, research should be used to evaluate the Future Accommodation Model, which suggests changes to the provision of Service family accommodation (SFA),[17] which intends to allow military families to rent outside the military community. This should focus on how S/P separation from the social networks provided by other women in the military community influences the mental health and well-being of S/Ps.

Conclusions

This thesis explored the mental health and well-being of spouses and partners of UK Service personnel using a mixed methods approach, with a focus on employment, mental health, alcohol misuse, marital satisfaction and accompanied postings. These findings demonstrate the influence that exposure to the military has on the outcomes of the spouses and partners (S/Ps) of Service personnel in the UK.

The prevalence of probable depression and hazardous alcohol consumption were significantly higher than estimates among similar women in the general English population. Nearly a third of S/Ps met criteria for marital distress, with a higher proportion reporting they were unhappy in their relationship than women in the general population. While overall, a similar proportion of S/Ps were employed as compared to women in the general population, the restricted options women face regarding employment women were illustrated by the higher proportion of S/Ps working in lower skilled roles that may be more adaptable to the disruptions associated with the military lifestyle. The associations between the S/P outcomes examined in this thesis suggest wider institutional factors such as Service, rank, the location of accompanied postings and family separation were associated with the mental health and well-being of women.

[17] See www.gov.uk/government/collections/mod-future-accommodation-model for further information.

The qualitative findings illustrated how S/Ps bore the brunt of concessions to military life, with women describing the limitations to their employment and career opportunities and perceived agency and the disruptions to their social networks and family lives. These concessions were not just limited to employment but to the identity of S/Ps as mothers, leading to resentment towards their husband and the military institution. Women described their incorporation into the hierarchical structure of the military according to their husband's position within the military community via the expectation to undertake particular social roles associated with his rank and how they sought to negotiate or resist the imposition of such identities in relation to the competing demands and expectations of their roles as workers, mothers and family members. Differences in how these experiences influenced the well-being of women depended on their descriptions of their perceived intrinsic or extrinsic motivations regarding employment and family life. However, the negative influences of restricted agency and enforced identities on well-being were reported to be mitigated by the sense of connectedness and belonging women experienced from other S/Ps.

This thesis is the first UK study to examine the mental health and well-being of spouses and partners (S/Ps) of UK Service personnel using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies and to provide prevalence estimates of mental health, alcohol misuse and marital health among S/Ps. Further research should be conducted to examine these findings in a wider sample of UK S/Ps and to expand the knowledge on this under-researched population.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Literature reviews

1.1 Literature review search terms

All literature reviews were conducted with the following search terms in the abstract, heading word, table of contents, key concepts of articles and matched to MeSH or keywords where possible:

Spouses – wives.mp. or wife.mp or spouse*.mp. or intimate partner* or cohabitating partner*.mp or couples.mp or exp Wives/ or exp Spouses/ or exp couples

Service personnel – military personnel.mp. or military families.mp. or veterans.mp. or exp military personnel/ or exp air force personnel/ or exp army personnel/ or exp coast guard personnel/ or exp commissioned officers/ or exp enlisted military personnel/ or exp marine personnel/ or exp military medical personnel/ or exp national guard personnel/ or exp navy personnel/ or exp volunteer military personnel/ or exp military veterans/ or exp military families

These search terms were combined and the following search terms added for each separate review:

Employment	**Depression and PTSD**
Employment OR unemployment OR under?employment OR occupation* OR labour force OR career OR job).mp exp Employment status/ or exp Unemployment/ or exp Reemployment/ or exp Self Employment/ or exp Working Women/ or exp Occupations/	Common mental disorders OR mental disorders OR mental health OR mental state OR Depression OR major depression OR anxiety PTSD OR Post?Traumatic Stress Disorder OR Secondary traumati#ation OR vicarious traumati#ation OR secondary trauma OR vicarious trauma OR secondary traumatic stress or psychological stress or psychological distress Subject headings: Major depression, Anxiety, Anxiety Disorders, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, Psychological stress/distress

Alcohol misuse	**Marital satisfaction**
Alcoholism.mp. or alcohol problems or alcohol or alcohol drinking.mp. or alcohol dependence.mp. or alcohol abuse.mp. or drinking behaviour.mp. or exp Alcoholism/ or exp alcohol drinking patterns/ or exp drinking behavior /	"Relationship quality" OR "interpersonal relationships" OR "marital satisfaction" OR ""marital relationship" OR "relationship satisfaction" OR "marital distress" OR "marital functioning" OR "dyadic adjustment" OR "dyadic satisfaction" OR "couple adjustment" OR "couple functioning" OR "relationship adjustment" OR "couple satisfaction" OR "marital discord" or "marital health"

1.2 Details of articles included in the literature reviews

Table 29: Literature review articles

Authors	Date	Title	Country	Population	Method of data collection	Date of data collection	N	Response rate	Review
Alessi, Ray, et al	2001	Personality And Psychopathology Profiles Of Veterans' Wives: Measuring Distress Using The MMPI-2	US	S/Ps of veterans seeking psychological services at VA hospitals	Survey	-	131	-	Mental health
Allen, Rhoades, et al	2010	Hitting Home: Relationships Between Recent Deployment, Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms, And Marital Functioning For Army Couples	US	Active duty Army couples	Survey	2007	434	-	Marital satisfaction
Andres	2014	Distress, Support And Relationship Satisfaction During Military-Induced Separations: A Longitudinal Study Among Spouses Of	Netherlands	Married or cohabiting S/Ps	Survey	-	153	-	Marital satisfaction

		Dutch Deployed Military Personnel							
Angrist and Johnson	2000	Effects Of Work-Related Absences On Families: Evidence From The Gulf War	US	Officers & Enlisted Personnel & S/Ps	Survey	1992	59,930	62%	Employment
Asbury and Martin	2012	Military Deployment And The Spouse Left Behind	US	Married college students & S/Ps	Online survey	-	62 students, 59 S/Ps	-	Mental health, marital satisfaction
Atkins	2009	A Picture Of Australian Defence Force Families 2009: Results From The First Survey Of Australian Defence Force Families General Report	Australia	S/Ps of Australian Defence Forces	Survey	2008	5,749	20.6%	Employment
Bergmann, Renshaw et al	2014	Meaningfulness Of Service And Marital Satisfaction In Army Couples	US	Active duty Army S/Ps enrolled in relationship intervention programme	Survey	2007-2008	606	NA	Marital satisfaction
Blow,	2013	Hazardous Drinking And	US	National Guard	Survey	2007-2009	674	1st wave	Mental

Gorman et al		Family Functioning In National Guard Veterans And Spouse Post-deployment		veteran S/Ps				35.9% 2nd wave 71.4%	health, alcohol misuse, marital satisfaction
Blue Star Families	2013	2013 Military Family Lifestyle Survey	US	Military families	Online survey	2013	3153	62%	Employment, marital satisfaction
Blue Star Families	2014	2014 Military Family Lifestyle Survey	US	Military families	Online survey	2014	3328	53%	Employment, marital satisfaction
Borelli, Sbarra et al	2013	Linguistic Indicators Of Wives' Attachment Security And Communal Orientation During Military Deployment	US	S/Ps of deploying personnel	Surveys and interviews	-	41	-	Marital satisfaction
Bowen	1985	Inter-Cultural Marriage In The Military: A Comparative Analysis	US	Air Force couples	Interviews	-	664	Nearly 70%	Marital satisfaction
Bowen	1987	Wives Employment Status And Marital Adjustment In Military Families	US	Air Force S/Ps	Surveys and interviews	-	675	Nearly 70%	Marital satisfaction

Bowen	1989	Sex-Role Congruency And Marital Quality Revisited	US	Air Force couples	Surveys and interviews	-	928	Nearly 70%	Marital satisfaction
Bowen and Orthner	1983	Sex-Role Congruency And Marital Quality	US	Air Force couples	Surveys and interviews	-	331	Nearly 70%	Marital satisfaction
Burrell, Adams et al	2006a	The Impact Of Military Lifestyle Demands On Well-Being, Army, And Family Outcomes	US	S/Ps of overseas based units of Army	Survey	2002	346	13%	Marital satisfaction
Campbell and Renshaw	2012	Distress In Spouses Of Vietnam Veterans: Associations With Communication About Deployment Experiences	US	Vietnam veterans S/Ps	Interviews	-	375	-	Marital satisfaction
Campbell and Renshaw	2013	PTSD Symptoms, Disclosure, And Relationship Distress: Explorations Of Mediation And Associations Over Time	US	National Guard S/Ps	Survey – 6-9 month follow-up	2007-2008	91 S/Ps	43%, 37%	Marital satisfaction
Chandra,	2011	Views From The	US	Mothers of children	Surveys	2007-2008	1127	Not given	Marital

Lara-Cinisomo et al		Homefront: The Experiences Of Youth And Spouses From Military Families		attending a summer camp for military children aged 11-17 years	and interviews				satisfaction
Chartrand, Frank, et al	2008	Effect Of Parents' Wartime Deployment On The Behaviour Of Young Children In Military Families	US	S/Ps of Marine personnel with children aged 1-5 years of age enrolled in military childcare	Survey	2007	169	73%	Mental health
Cooke and Speirs	2005	Migration And Employment Among The Civilian S/Ps Of Military Personnel	US	Economic modelling	Census data	1985 & 1990	8350	-	Employment
Cooney, Segal et al	2009	Moving With The Military: Race, Class, And Gender Differences In The Employment Consequences Of Tied Migration	US	Officers, enlisted personnel & S/Ps	Dept. of Defence surveys	1992	13794	-	Employment
Dekel, Solomon et al	2005	Emotional Distress And Marital Adjustment Of Caregivers: Contribution Of	Israel	Veteran couples	Interviews & survey	-	215	-	Marital satisfaction

		Level Of Impairment And Appraised Burden							
Dirkzwager, Bramsen et al	2005	Secondary Traumatisation In Partners And Parents Of Dutch Peace-Keeping Soldiers	Netherlands	S/Ps of peace-keepers (99% women)	Survey	-	708	70%	Mental health, Marital satisfaction
Dunn, Urban et al	2010	Spousal/Partner Employment And Income (SPEI) Project: How Do Canadian Forces Spouses Compare?	Canada	Opposite sex couples where at least one person in Canadian Forces vs. other occupations	Census	2006	5945	-	Employment
Dursun and Sudom	2009	Impacts Of Military Life On Families: Results From The Perstempo Survey Of Canadian Forces Spouses	Canada	Armed Forces S/Ps	Postal survey	2006	1661	24%	Employment, mental health, marital satisfaction
Eaton, Hoge, et al	2008	Prevalence Of Mental Health Problems, Treatment Need, And Barriers To Care Among Primary Care-Seeking Spouses Of Military Service	US	S/Ps at on-base health clinics & family readiness groups meetings	Survey	2003	940	51	Mental health

		Members Involved In Iraq And Afghanistan Deployments							
Eran-Jona	2011	Married To The Military: Military-Family Relations In The Israel Defence Forces	Israel	Married Israeli S/Ps with at least one child	Survey	2003	965	NA	Employment
Erbes, Meis et al	2012a	An Examination Of PTSD Symptoms And Relationship Functioning In US Soldiers Of The Iraq War Over Time	US	National Guard S/Ps	Survey (follow-up 6-9 months)	2007-2008	49 couples	23% T1, 80% T2	Marital satisfaction
Erbes, Meis, et al	2012b	Psychiatric Distress Among Spouses Of National Guard Soldiers Prior To Combat Deployment	US	S/Ps of National Guard prior to deployment	Survey	-	216	77% S/Ps	Mental health, alcohol misuse
Faulk, Gloria, et al	2012	Depressive Symptoms Among US Military Spouses During Deployment: The Protective Effect Of Positive Emotions	US	S/Ps of Service personnel stationed at 2 US Army bases recruited via FRG	Online survey	-	367	-	Mental health
Franciskovic,	2007	Secondary Traumatization	Croatia	S/Ps of veterans	Survey	2005	56	64%	Mental

Stevanovic et al		Of Wives Of War Veterans With Posttraumatic Stress Disorder		with PTSD in intensive treatment programme					health
Gallagher, Riggs, et al	1998	Female Partners' Estimations Of Male Veterans' Combat-Related PTSD Severity	US	S/Ps of Vietnam veterans married or cohabiting for at least 1 year	Survey	-	50	-	Mental health
Glisson, Melton, et al	1980	The Effect Of Separation On Marital Satisfaction, Depression And Self-Esteem	US	Submariner S/Ps	Survey 5 wks prior to 5 wks after departure	-	37	-	Mental health, marital satisfaction
Gorman, Blow et al	2011	National Guard Families After Combat: Mental Health, Use Of Mental Health Services, And Perceived Treatment Barriers	US	National Guard members & S/Ps attending reintegration workshop	Survey	2007-2008	212	36%	Mental health, alcohol misuse
Grant, Heath et al	2005	Assessing Assortative Mating And Reciprocal Spousal Influences On Alcoholism In A Sample Of	US	S/Ps of twin Vietnam veterans	Telephone survey	2002	424	-	Alcohol misuse

		Vietnam-Era Veteran Twins And Their Spouses							
Grossman	1981	The Employment Situation for Military Wives	US	S/Ps of Service personnel compared to women married to civilian	Bureau of Labour data	1970-1979	-	-	Employment
Haddock, Poston et al	1995	Health Behaviours Of Military Retirees: Incidence Of Smoking And Alcohol Use	US	S/Ps of retired military personnel	Survey	-	983	-	Alcohol misuse
Hamilton, Nelson Goff et al	2009	Primary Trauma Of Female Partners In A Military Sample: Individual Symptoms And Relationship Satisfaction	US	Army couples deployed on OIF/OEF	Survey	2004-2005	45	80.4%	Marital satisfaction
Harrell, Lim et al	2004	Working Around The Military: Challenges To Military Spouse Employment And Education	US	Married S/Ps & comparable women in the general population	Census, S/Ps & Current Population Surveys	1990 Census, 1999 survey	36508 surveyed	-	Employment
Hayghe	1986	Military and Civilian Wives: Update on the Labour	US	S/Ps of Service personnel compared	Bureau of Labour	1986	-	-	Employment

		Force Gap		to women married to civilian	data				
Heaton and Krull	2012	Unemployment Among Post-9/11 Veterans And Military Spouses After The Economic Downturn	US	Armed Forces S/Ps	2010 American Community Survey ACS	2010	Nearly 5000	98%	Employment
Hendrix, Erdman et al	1998	Impact Of Vietnam Veterans' Arousal And Avoidance On Spouses' Perceptions Of Family Life	US	Vietnam veterans S/Ps	Survey	-	85	33%	Marital satisfaction
Herzog, Everson et al	2011	Do Secondary Trauma Symptoms In Spouses Of Combat-Exposed National Guard Soldiers Mediate Impacts Of Soldiers' Trauma Exposure On Their Children	US	S/Ps of National Guard personnel	Survey	-	54	-	Mental health
Hosek, Asch et al	2002	Married To The Military: The Employment And Earnings Of Military Wives Compared To Those Of	US	Military & civilian families	Population Survey of labour market	1987-1999	5831 military families	-	Employment

		Civilian Wives			outcomes				
Hosek, Wadsworth et al	2013	Economic Conditions Of Military Families	US	Variety of surveys	-	Post 2000	-	-	Employment
Hoyt and Renshaw	2013	Emotional Disclosure And Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms: Veteran And Spouse Reports	US	S/Ps of National Guard/reserves deployed to OEF/OIF	3 months post deployment & 4-6 months later	-	80	-	Mental health
Ickovics and Martin	1987	The Impact of Employment on the Psychological Well-being of Army Wives: A Longitudinal Study		Army wives at T1 and T2 – 6 months later	Panel study	-	278	70%	Employment
Johnson, Harsha et al	1993	Fort Polk Heart Smart Program: IV. Lifestyles Of Military Personnel And Their Families	US	Army families in the Fort Polk Heart Smart Program	-	-	234	-	Alcohol misuse
Jordan, Marmar et al	1992	Problems With Families Of Male Vietnam Veterans With Posttraumatic Stress Disorder	US	Vietnam veterans S/Ps	Survey	-	376 - 122 with PTSD	80%	Alcohol misuse, marital satisfaction

Joseph and Afifi	2010	Military Wives' Stressful Disclosures To Their Deployed Husbands: The Role Of Protective Buffering	US	S/Ps of deployed personnel with at least one child	Survey	-	105	-	Marital satisfaction
Kelley	1994	Military-Induced Separation In Relation To Maternal Adjustment And Children's Behaviours	US	Navy S/Ps recruited t pre-deployment meetings	Survey – 3 phase	1989-1991	61 mothers	82%	Mental health
Klaric, Franciskovic et al	2011	Marital Quality And Relationship Satisfaction In War Veterans And Their Wives In Bosnia And Herzegovina	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Veterans & S/Ps	Survey	2007	154 personnel with PTSD, 77 without	-	Marital satisfaction
Klaric,, Franciskovic, et al	2012	Psychiatric And Health Impact Of Primary And Secondary Traumatization In Wives Of Veterans With Posttraumatic Stress Disorder	Bosnia & Herzegovina	S/Ps of veterans treated for PTSD in hospital & S/Ps of veterans without PTSD from veteran associations		2007	154 S/Ps of veterans with PTSD, 77 without	66.56% veterans 64.99% S/Ps Controls, snowball method	Mental health
Knobloch, Ebata, et al	2013	Depressive Symptoms, Relational Turbulence, And	US	Service members & S/Ps	3-phrase online	2010-2011	118 couples	NA	Mental health

		The Reintegration Difficulty Of Military Couples Following Wartime Deployment			survey				
Lakhani	1994	The Socioeconomic Benefits to Military Families of Home-Basing of Armed Forces	US	S/Ps of enlisted soldiers in US or overseas	Army Families survey and Army Family Research Programme (AFRP) data	1987 & 1989	12,000 & 11,000	-	Employment
Lester, Peterson, et al	2010	The Long War And Parental Combat Deployment: Effects On Military Children And At-Home Spouses	US	Military children & S/Ps		2008	171 families	92% of responding families	Mental health
Lim and Schulker	2010	Measuring Underemployment Among Military Spouses	US	S/Ps Married women in	2006 Survey of Active Duty S/Ps	2005-2006 2006	11138 76700	32.7% 83.3%	Employment

				the general population	2006 Current Population Survey				
Lim, Gollinelli et al	2007	Working Around The Military: Revisited Spouse Employment In The 2000 Census Data	US	Tri-service S/Ps, women in the general population	Census data	2000	19676 S/Ps 340173 civilians	-	Employment
MacDonell, Thorsteinsson et al	2014	Psychological Functioning Of Partners Of Australian Combat Veterans: Contribution Of Veterans' PTSD Symptoms And Partners' Caregiving Distress	Australia	Veteran S/Ps	Survey	-	181	-	Marital satisfaction
Manning and DeRouin	1981	Employed Wives of US Army Members in Germany Fare Better Than Those Unemployed	US	Married Army S/Ps	Survey	1978	45	40.5%	Employment
Mansfield, Kaufman, et al	2010	Deployment And The Use Of Mental Health Services Among US Army Wives	US	ICD-9 diagnoses of S/Ps of active-duty Army personnel for		2003-2006	250,626	N/A	Mental health, alcohol

				outpatient appointments					misuse
Martin	1984	Life Satisfaction for Military Wives	US	S/Ps of active duty personnel on base in US	Survey	1982	315	70%	Employment
Martin and Ickovics	1987	The Effects Of Stress On The Psychological Well-Being Of Army Wives: Initial Findings From A Longitudinal Study	US	Army S/Ps - first-term junior enlisted & those with more experience (cadre)	2 phase postal survey	-	277 - 180 first term, 97 cadre	p1=75%, p2 NA	Marital satisfaction
Maury and Stone	2014	Military Spouse Employment Report	US	S/Ps of active duty personnel, women in the general population	S/Ps Employment Survey, American Community Survey	2013	2059	-	Employment
McGuire, Runge et al	2012	Timor-Leste Family Study: Technical Report	Australia	Australian S/Ps of Service personnel deployed to Timor-Leste	Survey, interviews	2011-2012	697 S/Ps deployed, 635 non-deployed	38% S/Ps deployed, 34.3% non-deployed	Mental health, alcohol misuse
Medway, Davis et al	1995	Family Disruption And Adult Attachment	US	National Guard S/Ps	Survey	1991	Study 1=117,	NA	Marital satisfaction

		Correlates Of Spouse And Child Reactions To Separation And Reunion Due To Operation Desert Storm					study 2=154		
Melvin and Gross	2012	Couple Functioning And Post- Traumatic Stress Symptoms In US Army Couples: The Role Of Resilience	US	Army S/Ps of Service personnel deployed on OIF or OEF	Survey	-	66 couples – 39 S/Ps, 27 dual military	77.6%	Mental health, marital satisfaction
Military One Source	2014	2012 Survey of Active Duty S/Ps S/Ps Military Support, Deployment, Reintegration, PCS Moves, Child Well-Being, Education and Employment, and S/Ps Well-Being: Briefing Overview	US	Married S/Ps of active duty members of Army, Navy, Marine Corps, & Air Force with at least 6 months service	Survey	2012-2013	65,000	23%	Employment
Miller, Meadows et al	2011	Year Of The Air Force Family: 2009 Survey Of Active-Duty Spouses	US	Air Force S/Ps – includes dual AF members	Survey, telephone interviews	2009	802	31%	Employment
Miller,	2013	Alcohol And Drug Abuse	US	S/Ps of veterans		-	242	-	Alcohol

Reardon et al		Among US Veterans: Comparing Associations With Intimate Partner Substance Abuse And Veteran Psychopathology		with PTSD diagnosis attending VA medical centres					misuse
Ministry of Defence	2014a	Tri-Service Families Continuous Attitude Survey	UK	Tri-service S/Ps	Survey	2014	7,560	25%	Employment
Ministry of Defence	2014b	Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey 2014	UK	Armed Forces personnel	Survey	2013-2014	13466	48%	Employment
Monk, Goff et al	2014	Military Couples' Trauma Disclosure: Moderating Between Trauma Symptoms And Relationship Quality	US	Army S/Ps	Survey	-	50	-	Marital satisfaction
Nelson Goff, Crow et al	2007	The Impact Of Individual Trauma Symptoms Of Deployed Soldiers On Relationship Satisfaction	US	Army couples deployed on OIF/OEF	Surveys	2004-2005	45	80.36%	Marital satisfaction
O'Toole, Outram, et al	2010	The Mental Health Of Partners Of Australian Vietnam Veterans Three Decades After The War And	Australia	Vietnam veterans and their current or former S/Ps	Telephone interview	2004-2006	240	56.3% known S/Ps, 64.9% of S/Ps where	Mental health

		Its Relation To Veteran Military Service, Combat, And PTSD						veteran gave consent to contact	
Padden, Connors et al	2011	Determinants Of Health-Promoting Behaviours In Military Spouses During Deployment Separation	US	S/Ps in family readiness groups		2005	105	-	Alcohol misuse
Paulus, Nagar et al	1996	Environmental, Lifestyle And Psychological Factors In The Health and Well-being Of Military Families	US	Enlisted Army families living off base	Survey	-	130 spouses & personnel – 6 male	-	Marital satisfaction
Pittman	1994	Work/Family Fit As A Mediator Of Work Factors On Marital Tensions: Evidence From The Interface Of Greedy Institutions	US	Army couples	Survey	-	422	66%	Marital satisfaction
Renshaw and Caska	2012	Relationship Distress In Partners Of Combat Veterans: The Role Of Partners' Perceptions Of	US	National Guard S/Ps	Survey	1. 2007-2008; 2. -	1. 258 – 98.4% women; 2. 465	1. 52.7%; 2. -	Marital satisfaction

		Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms					couples - Viet vets – 120 S/Ps provided info on perceptions of veterans PTSD symptoms – 81% women		
Renshaw, Allen, et al	2011	Distress In Spouses Of Service Members With Symptoms Of Combat-Related PTSD: Secondary Traumatic Stress Or General Psychological Distress	US	S/Ps of Service personnel who had possible combat-related PTSD based on score ≥34 on PCL	-	-	190	-	Mental health
Renshaw, Allen et al	2014a	Partners' Attributions For Service Members' Symptoms Of Combat-	US	Army S/Ps	Survey	-	294	-	Marital satisfaction

		Related Posttraumatic Stress Disorder							
Renshaw, Campbell et al	2014b	Gender Differences In The Associations Of PTSD Symptom Clusters With Relationship Distress In US Vietnam Veterans And Their Partners	US	Vietnam veterans S/Ps	Survey	-	465 (375 female S/Ps)	-	Marital satisfaction
Renshaw, Rodebaugh et al	2010	Psychological And Marital Distress In Spouses Of Vietnam Veterans: Importance Of Spouses' Perceptions	US	Vietnam veterans S/Ps	Survey	-	465 (90 male S/Ps, not reported separately)	-	Marital satisfaction
Renshaw, Rodrigues et al	2008	Psychological Symptoms And Marital Satisfaction In Spouses Of Operation Iraqi Freedom Veterans: Relationships With Spouses' Perceptions Of Veterans' Experiences And Symptoms	US	National Guard S/Ps	Survey	2005-2006	49	-	Mental health, marital satisfaction

Riggs, Byrne et al	1998	The Quality Of The Intimate Relationships Of Male Vietnam Veterans: Problems Associated With Posttraumatic Stress Disorder	US	Vietnam veterans S/Ps	Survey	-	50 - 26 personnel with PTSD, 24 without	-	Marital satisfaction
Rohall, Hamilton, et al	2001	Downsizing The Russian Army: Quality Of Life And Mental Health Consequences For Former Organizational Members, Survivors, And Spouses	Russia	Officer S/Ps	Interviews	1995, 1997	1609, 1312	94%, 82%	Mental health
Rosen	1995	Life Events And Symptomatic Recovery Of Army Spouses Following Operation Desert Storm	US	Army S/Ps	Survey	1991	776	67%	Mental health
Rosen and Moghadam	1991	Predictors Of General Well-being Among Army Wives	US	Army S/Ps	Survey	1987	332	30%	Marital satisfaction
Rosen, Ickovics et al	1990	Employment and Role Satisfaction: Implications for the General Well-Being of Military Wives	US	S/Ps of Service personnel in combat battalions in US and Europe	Path analysis	1987	1145	40%	Employment, marital satisfaction

Schumm, Bell et al	1996	The Perceived Effect Of Stressors On Marital Satisfaction Among Civilian Wives Of Enlisted Soldiers Deployed To Somalia For Operation Restore Hope	US	Enlisted Army S/Ps	Survey	1993	984	46%	Marital satisfaction
Schwartz, Wood, et al	1990	The Employment Status of Army Spouses	US	S/Ps of Service personnel compared to women married to civilian	Current Population Survey	1985	-	-	Employment
Schwartz, Wood, et al	1991	The Impact of Military Life on Spouse Labour Force Outcomes	US	S/Ps of active duty officers & enlisted personnel stationed in US or overseas	Survey	1985	5484	30%	Employment
Solomon, Waysman et al	1992	Marital Relations And Combat Stress Reaction: The Wives' Perspective	Israel	S/Ps of veterans with CSR compared with S/Ps of veterans without CSR 6 years after conflict	Interviews & survey	1988	80 - 49 S/Ps of CSR personnel	-	Mental health, marital satisfaction
Solomon, Waysman,	1991	Psychiatric Symptomatology Among	Israel	S/Ps of veterans of Lebanon War with	Clinical interview	1988	49	73%	Mental health

et al		Wives Of Soldiers Following Combat Stress Reaction: The Role Of The Social Network And Marital Relations		CSR					
Stander, McClure et al	1998	Military Marriages In The 1990s	US	Military couples – 70.7% civilian wives	Dept. of Defence Survey of S/Ps of Officers and Enlisted Personnel Interviews	1992	24,165 141	37% -	Employment
SteelFisher, Zaslavsky et al	2008	Health-Related Impact Of Deployment Extensions On Spouses Of Active Duty Personnel	US	S/Ps of active duty Army personnel living near 10 major bases	Survey	2004	798	55.6%	Employment
Sudom	2010	Quality Of Life Among	Canada	Canadian S/Ps	Survey	2008-2009	2,084	21.3%	Employment,

		Military Families: Results From The 2008-2009 Survey Of Canadian Forces Spouses							mental health
Taft, King et al	1999	Partners' Ratings Of Combat Veterans' PTSD Symptomatology	US	Vietnam veterans S/Ps	Archived survey data	-	466 – 376 male-female	-	Marital satisfaction
Thoresen and Goldsmith	1987	The Relationship Between Army Families' Financial Well-Being And Depression, General Well-Being, And Marital Satisfaction	US	Active Duty Army S/Ps	Surveys and interviews	-	30	NA	Mental health, marital satisfaction
Warner, Appenzeller, et al	2009	Psychological Effects Of Deployments Of Military Families	US	S/Ps of Army Brigade Combat Team personnel	Online survey	-	295 S/Ps	34%	Mental health
Westerink, Giarratano	1999	The Impact Of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder On Partners And Children Of Australian Vietnam Veterans	Australia	S/Ps of Vietnam veterans in contact with health services, controls university or hospital	Postal survey	-	32 S/Ps, 15 controls	61%	Mental health

				volunteers					
Westman and Vinokur	1998	Unravelling The Relationship Of Distress Levels Within Couples: Common Stressors, Empathic Reactions, Or Crossover Via Social Interaction?	US	Vietnam veterans & S/Ps	Interviews	-	354 couples	95-96%	Mental health
Westman, Vinokur et al	2004	Cross Over Of Marital Dissatisfaction During Military Downsizing Among Russian Army Officers And Their Spouses	Russia	Officers S/Ps	Interviews	1995 1997	1609 1341	93% 83% previous participants	Marital satisfaction
Wolf, Miller, et al	2012	A Latent Class Analysis Of Dissociation And Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: Evidence For A Dissociative Subtype	US	Veterans & S/Ps enrolled in recent studies in VA medical centres	Interviews, questionnaires	-	166 S/Ps	-	Mental health

Appendix 2: Quantitative appendices

Table 30: Association between S/P employment and Service personnel serving status (col %, X^2)

Socio-demographic variables	Service personnel serving status % (N)		X2	df
Employed outside the home - overall	**Still serving (n=255)**	**No longer in Service (n=150)**		
Yes	64.2 (158)	80.4 (116)		
No	35.8 (91)	19.6 (29)	9.77**	1

Missing=11 ‡p<0.10 *p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

Table 31: Associations between S/P occupational social class and S/P socio-demographics (row %, X^2)

Socio-demographic variables	NSSEC occupational social class, row % (N)			X2	df
S/P age (years)	**Managerial/ professional 34.3% (N=88)**	**Intermediate 40.8% (N=106)**	**Routine & manual 24.9% (N=62)**		
25-34	34.2 (15)	37.8 (21)	28.0 (14)		
35-44	31.2 (49)	41.5 (54)	27.4 (36)		
45-55	40.9 (23)	43.4 (31)	15.7 (11)	0.81	2
Proximity to military base					
In town, village away from base	34.0 (64)	41.7 (82)	24.2 (45)		
Military housing/town near base	31.5 (18)	41.6 (21)	26.9 (14)	0.10	1
Urban/rural residence					
Major/minor urban, city/town	34.8 (41)	38.1 (51)	27.2 (32)		
Rural town/village, dispersed	39.6 (26)	42.4 (24)	18.0 (12)	0.79	1

Number of children					
1	40.2 (48)	37.6 (51)	22.2 (29)		
2 or more	27.7 (40)	44.4 (55)	27.9 (33)	1.93	1
Age of youngest child (years)					
3-10	36.8 (63)	37.9 (64)	25.3 (42)		
11-18	28.9 (25)	47.2 (42)	24.0 (20)	1.01	1
Relationship status					
Married	32.4 (75)	43.2 (93)	24.4 (50)		
Other	51.5 (11)	19.7 (7)	28.9 (11)	2.62‡	1

Missing= 11-115 ‡p<0.10 *p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

Table 32: Associations between S/P and Service personnel probable depression, PTSD and alcohol misuse (col %, X^2)

Service personnel mental health	**S/P probable depression % (N)**		**X^2**	**df**
Service personnel probable PTSD (PCL-C)	**No (PHQ-9 ≤9)**	**Yes (PHQ-9 ≥10)**		
No (PCL-C ≤49)	94.7 (306)	100 (23)		
Yes (PCL-C ≥50)	5.3 (15)	0 (0)	1.12	1
	S/P alcohol misuse % (N)			
Service personnel alcohol misuse	**No (AUDIT ≤7)**	**Yes (AUDIT ≥8)**		
No (AUDIT ≤15)	90.2 (267)	84.4 (40)		
Yes (AUDIT ≥16)	9.8 (30)	15.6 (7)	1.38	1

Based on 344 couples ‡p<0.10 *p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

Table 33: Prevalence of mental health comorbidities among S/Ps compared to women in the general English population (col %, X^2)

Mental health comorbidities	S/Ps % (N=405)	APMS % (N=1595)	X2	df
No comorbidities	76.3 (309)	81.5 (1256)		
1 comorbidities	18.4 (65)	16.1 (274)		
2 or more comorbidities	5.3 (20)	2.4 (45)	4.10*	2

Missing=11-20 ‡p<0.10 *p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

Table 34: Prevalence of marital distress among S/Ps

Marital distress caseness	S/Ps % (N)
Probable marital distress (DAS-7 scores)	
No (<21)	69.2 (265)
Yes (≥21)	30.8 (111)

Missing=29

Table 35: Association between S/P urban-rural residence and proximity to military bases (col %, X^2)

Urban/rural residence	S/P proximity to military base % (N)		X2	df
	In town, village away from base (n=271)	Military housing/town near base (n=102)		
Major/minor urban, city/town	70.8 (147)	50.5 (32)		
Rural town/village, dispersed	29.3 (61)	49.6 (33)	8.28**	1

Missing=32-115 ‡p<0.10 *p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

Table 36: CFA factor loadings for marital satisfaction latent variables (N=344)

Latent variables	CFA without modification			CFA with modification		
S/P marital satisfaction[b]	**B (SE)**[a]	**β**	**p**	**B (SE)**[b]	**β**	**p**
S/P factor loadings						
DAS-01	1.000	0.691	<0.001	1.000	0.555	<0.001
DAS-02	1.070 (0.059)	0.740	<0.001	1.119 (0.074)	0.621	<0.001
(DAS01-DAS-02)	-	-		*0.355 (0.038)*	*0.544*	*<0.001*
DAS-03	0.920 (0.060)	0.636	<0.001	1.189 (0.102)	0.659	<0.001
DAS-04	1.075 (0.059)	0.743	<0.001	1.380 (0.107)	0.765	<0.001
DAS-05	1.085 (0.060)	0.750	<0.001	1.392 (0.108)	0.772	<0.001
DAS-06	0.995 (0.057)	0.688	<0.001	1.282 (0.009)	0.711	<0.001
DAS-07	0.992 (0.061)	0.686	<0.001	1.265 (0.102)	0.701	<0.001
Service personnel marital satisfaction[c]						
Service personnel factor loadings						
DAS-01	1.000	0.630	<0.001	1.000	0.529	<0.001
DAS-02	1.212 (0.096)	0.764	<0.001	1.294 (0.118)	0.685	<0.001
(DAS01-DAS-02)	-	-		*0.251 (0.029)*	*0.406*	*<0.001*
DAS-03	1.010 (0.080)	0.637	<0.001	1.231 (0.114)	0.652	<0.001
DAS-04	1.009 (0.092)	0.636	<0.001	1.233 (0.128)	0.652	<0.001
DAS-05	1.150 (0.085)	0.725	<0.001	1.407 (0.127)	0.745	<0.001
DAS-06	1.086 (0.088)	0.685	<0.001	1.319 (0.125)	0.698	<0.001
DAS-07	1.055 (0.079)	0.665	<0.001	1.289 (0.112)	0.682	<0.001

Based on data from 344 couples (no listwise deletion) [a] B= B coefficient, β= beta coefficient
[b] CFA without modification CFI=0.902, TLI=0.853, with modification CFI=0.954, TLI=0.926
[c] CFA without modification CFI=0.875, TLI=0.812, with modification CFI=0.906, TLI=0.848

Appendix 3: Qualitative study documentation

3.1 Online survey

3.1.1 Introductory brief for email and webpage

How do accompanied postings affect the wellbeing of women with partners' in the UK Armed Forces?

Brief for email accompanying link and introductory webpage

Introduction
We would like to invite you to take part in a short online survey about accompanied postings and Army families. This survey will help provide us with information on the number of moves you and your family have made in the last 5 years and how this might differ by certain factors such as your partners' rank. This will give us information on how moves due to posting changes are similar or different between Army families. The survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

We have your contact details from a previous study you took part in about the effects of military life on children in Service families (The Welfare of Children of Military Fathers study). At that time, you consented to be followed-up for further research and so we would like to invite you to take part in this online survey. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary and you are under no obligation to take part.

Please click the following link <INSERT LINK HERE> to find out more or take part.

As well as this online survey, we will be shortly starting a new study looking at how changes to accompanied postings affect the wellbeing of women with partners' in the UK Army. Your answers to the online survey questions will help us identify women we would like to interview for this new study.

The study will interview women by telephone about their experiences of employment opportunities, social networks and support, and relationships and how these might change when Army families move because of a new accompanied posting. If you would like to find out more about the interviews, or are interested in taking part, please tick the relevant boxes in the online survey to indicate this. If you are eligible for the interview study, an information pack will then be posted to you.

Participation in the interviews is completely voluntary and you are under no obligation to take part.

About us
The King's Centre for Military Health Research (KCMHR) is an academic research team at King's College London. KCMHR has been conducting research into issues relevant to current and former members of the UK Armed Forces and their families since 1996. KCMHR is independent of the UK Ministry of Defence.

Brief for introductory webpage

Introduction
We would like to invite you to take part in a short online survey about accompanied postings and Army families. This survey will help provide us with information on the number of moves you and your family have made in the last 5 years and how this might differ by certain factors such as your partners' rank. This will give us information on how moves due to posting changes are similar or different between Army families. The survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

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Please click the following link <INSERT LINK HERE> to find out more or take part.

As well as this online survey, we will be shortly starting a new study looking at how changes to accompanied postings affect the wellbeing of women with partners' in the UK Army. Your answers to the online survey questions will help us identify women we would like to interview for this new study.

Participant Pre-interview Survey Brief v1.2 July 2014

DRAFT

The study will interview women by telephone about their experiences of employment opportunities, social networks and support, and relationships and how these might change when Army families move because of a new accompanied posting. If you would like to find out more about the interviews, or are interested in taking part, please tick the relevant boxes in the online survey to indicate this. If you are eligible for the interview study, an information pack will then be posted to you.

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DRAFT

3.1.2 Online survey questions

Study Number: **XXXXXXX**
Participant Identification Number:**XXXX**

How do accompanied postings affect the wellbeing of women with partners' in the UK Armed Forces?

Please tick the following/fill in as applicable:

I confirm that I have read and understand the information brief about this online survey — Yes ☐ No ☐

I consent to taking part in this survey — Yes ☐ No ☐

I am currently in a relationship (married or other) with a member of the UK Army — Yes ☐ No ☐

I have been in this relationship for ……months/years (delete as appropriate)

They are currently serving — Yes ☐ No ☐

Their current rank is _____

I would describe my current employment status as:

- Full-time employment ☐
- Part-time employment ☐
- Self-employed ☐
- Looking after children ☐
- Not currently employed ☐

DRAFT

Have you ever had to move as a family (accompanied posting) due to a change in your husbands'/partners' posting? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please state which year(s) you moved in ……..……..

……..……..……..

3.2 Qualitative study documentation

3.2.1 Invitation letter

King's Centre for Military Health Research
King's College, London
Weston Education Centre
10 Cutcombe Road
London SE5 9RJ

15 April 2015

Principal Investigators:
Professor Nicola Fear
Dr Laura Goodwin
Ms Rachael Gribble

Invitation to take part in a research study on the experiences of accompanied postings and transition among partners of former UK Army personnel

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study at the King's Centre for Military Health Research (KCMHR), King's College London. This study will use interviews to look at how the wellbeing of partners of former UK Army personnel might have been affected by their experiences of accompanied postings while their partner was in Service and the transition back to Civvy Street. The interview will cover topics such your employment opportunities, social networks and support and relationship with your husband/partner and how these might have changed when you and your family moved because of a new accompanied posting. It will also cover your experiences of your relationship with your husband/partner and finding work after Service.

The study will involve participation in a telephone interview with our researcher at a time that is convenient for you. This will take no more than 75 minutes, and we will give you £20 as a thank you for your time. Taking part is completely confidential and voluntary. You are under no obligation to take part and can withdraw at any time without giving a reason. If you wish, you can let other people know you are taking part.

If you are interested in taking part or finding out more about the study, please read the enclosed participant information sheet to find out more. If you have questions, you can contact the research team on 020 7848 5343, or, if you prefer, you can email your contact details or any questions to rachael.gribble@kcl.ac.uk and we can call you back to confirm your interest or answer any questions you may have.

"The Army Families Federation is fully supportive of this study which will provide much-needed information about military partners and spouses in the UK. The study covers many issues that we find affect military partners such as employment, relocation and health and wellbeing.

Your participation in the study is completely voluntary. However, we need your help to try and understand, and raise awareness, about the issues the military wives and partners face. The findings of this research can help us influence policy at both the AFF and Ministry of Defence."

Thank you very much for reading this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Rachael Gribble
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King's College London
Weston Education Centre
10 Cutcombe Road
London SE5 9RJ

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E: rachael.gribble@kcl.ac.uk

3.2.2 Information sheet

Experiences of accompanied postings and transition among partners of former UK Army personnel

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Introduction
We would like to invite you to take part in a study on how the wellbeing of partners of former UK Army personnel might have been affected by accompanied postings during their husband or partners' time in Service. We are also interested in how former military partners are affected by the transition back to Civvy Street. Well-being refers to feeling satisfied with life, happy or that things are going well, with few periods of stress or sadness or other poor moods, rather than just feeling physically well.

To help you make an informed decision about whether you would like to take part in this study, it is important that you understand why we are doing this research and what your participation would involve. Please read the following information and feel free discuss it with others if you wish.

What is the King's Centre for Military Health Research?
The King's Centre for Military Health Research (KCMHR) is an academic research team at King's College London. KCMHR has been conducting research into issues relevant to current and former members of the UK Armed Forces and their families since 1996. KCMHR is independent of the Ministry of Defence.

How has KCMHR been able to contact me?
KCMHR has been able to contact you from your details given during the Children of Military Fathers study that you participated in. At this time you indicated that you might be interested in taking part in future research at KCMHR.

What is the purpose of this study?
This study will look at how accompanied postings and transition out of Service life might have affected women who are in relationships with former UK Army personnel. Talking to women who are in relationships with former UK Army personnel will help identify how certain areas of life, such as employment, relationships and social networks might have been affected as a result of accompanied postings and how this relates to wellbeing. Your experiences of transition back to Civvy Street will also help identify how these same areas might be affected once you leave Service life. The information you provide during the study could then be used by organisations such as the MoD, the UK Army and military family charities to help provide support for women with military partners during this time to improve wellbeing and employment.

What will I be asked about in the interview if I decide to take part?
You will be asked questions about your experiences of accompanied postings and your transition back to Civvy Street and how these events might have affected you. The interview will cover your employment opportunities, social networks and support and relationship with your husband/partner and any changes to these that happened because of the move or

leaving Service. Your consent to take part in the study and your interview will be recorded to make sure that the interviewer does not miss any of the information you give. If you do not want the interview to be recorded, you can still take part – just indicate this on the consent form.

Who can take part in the study?
You are able to take part in the study if your partner or husband left Service within the last 5 years and if you had at least one accompanied posting in the 5 years before he left Service.

Who is funding the study?
The study is being funded by the Economic Social Research Council and the Army Families Federation (AFF) as part of a PhD project at KCMHR.

Do I have to take part in the study?
Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You are under no obligation to take part and can withdraw at any time without giving a reason. If you wish, you can let other people know you are taking part.

What will I have to do if I decide to take part?
If you would like to take part, you can contact the researcher to arrange a convenient time for you to do a telephone interview, otherwise the researcher will follow-up with you after about a week of sending out the study pack. The interview will take no more than 75 minutes but may be shorter or longer, depending on how much you have to discuss. As a thank you for your time, we are giving all participants £20.

Will my data be safe?
All your information from the interviews is strictly confidential and will be stored securely. All audio recordings of interviews will be destroyed after they have been transcribed and checked for accuracy. Only the research team will have access to your data and it will not be shared with anyone else. The only exception is if you tell us something which makes us concerned about your safety or the safety of others, at which point we would be legally obliged to tell the appropriate authorities. Any reports arising from this study will be anonymised and will not include your name or details that could lead to you (or your family) being identified.

For how long will my information be kept?
The information collected from the interviews will be stored for 20 years, in line with guidance from the Medical Research Council. After this time, the information will be securely destroyed.

What are the benefits of taking part?
While there may not be any immediate benefits from taking part in this study, many people who have been interviewed have said that they liked having the opportunity to talk about their experiences. By taking part you will be helping us to better understand the experiences that women with military partners face during accompanied postings and after leaving Service. This information may help develop services and programmes that support women during these times.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?
It is unlikely that taking part in the study will be harmful to you. If you find you are not comfortable answering some of the questions, please let the interviewer know. You can also stop the interview at all time if you do not want to continue or would like to take a break.

What happens after the interview?
The interviews will be typed up and examined to see if there are any similar responses between participants. Some of your answers may be particularly interesting and the interviewer may want to quote them in the final report; if you do not agree to this, please tell the interviewer or tick the 'No' box on the consent form. Results will be reported anonymously, meaning that you or your family will not identifiable from your responses.

What if I change my mind?
You can change your mind about taking part at any time before, during, or after, the interview without giving a reason. If you do change your mind or have any questions after the interview, please contact the researcher.

What will happen to the results of the research?
The overall findings will be reported as part of a PhD thesis. Academic papers will also be written from the interviews and the findings presented to organisations interested in military families. If you are interested, a summary of our findings can be sent to you at the end of study.

How will I get the £20?
Once you have completed the telephone interview, we will send you a cheque for £20.

Who has reviewed this study?
This study has been reviewed and approved by the London-Dulwich National Research Ethics Service committee (Ref: 08/H0808/27). The committee who approved this study is a group of independent people who review research projects to protect the dignity, rights, safety and wellbeing of participants and researchers.

What do I do next?
If you are happy with the information above and wish to take part, please contact the interviewer on 020 7848 5343. If you prefer, you can email your contact details or any questions about the study to rachael.gribble@kcl.ac.uk and the interviewer will call you to confirm your interest or answer any queries you may have.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Rachael Gribble
PhD Student
King's Centre Military Health Research
King's College London

Tel: 0207 848 5343
rachael.gribble@kcl.ac.uk

Principal Investigators:
Prof Nicola Fear
Dr Laura Goodwin

Tel: 0207 848 5351

3.2.3 Consent form

Study Number:
Participant Identification Number:

Experiences of accompanied postings and transition among partners of former UK Army personnel

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Please tick the following if you agree or disagree:

I have read the information sheet dated 14 April 2015 (version 1.3) that explains the study and why you would like to interview me	Yes ☐	No ☐
I understand the purpose of the study and am happy to take part	Yes ☐	No ☐
I have had the opportunity to ask any questions I may have about the study	Yes ☐	No ☐
I understand that the information I give you will remain confidential and will only be seen by the research team. I understand that my name will not be used in the reporting of the research at any time	Yes ☐	No ☐
I understand that my participation is voluntary and I can change my mind and leave the study at any time without giving a reason	Yes ☐	No ☐
I am happy for the interview to be recorded	Yes ☐	No ☐
I am happy for direct quotes from the interview to be used in the reports arising from this study	Yes ☐	No ☐

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Print name: _____

Participant Consent Form v1.3 14 April 2015

3.2.4 Interview topic schedule

INTERVIEW TOPIC SCHEDULE

Experiences of accompanied postings and transition among partners of former UK Army personnel

Preamble

- thank for taking part
- interview will be about an hour long – might take longer if you have more to talk about or less
  - *ok with participant, check don't have other plans*
  - *best if you are alone and in a quiet spot so we are not interrupted*

About the study

- 1st part - I am interested in finding out about whether moving as a result of changes to your husband's/partner's posting affected your well-being in any way – that is any move that you and your family made as a result of a new posting, rather than time spent apart either because your husband or partner was deployed or on training
- When I talk about well-being, I mean things like feeling satisfied with life, feeling happy and supported or that things are going well, with few periods of stress or sadness or other poor moods, rather than just feeling physically well
- 3 main areas – employment, family relationships and social networks & support, how relocation affects each of these and how any changes might affect your wellbeing
- 2nd part - I'm also interested in your experiences of employment and relationships during transition out of Service life and how this might have affected your wellbeing
- At the end, I'll ask if you have any recommendations you might like to suggest, for either the Army or MoD, that could help Army S/Ps during relocations
- Of course if there is anything else that you want to talk about, feel free

Section 1: Background/introductory questions

To start off, I have a few questions to help me get to know you

- go through general questions for participants' sheet

Gain verbal consent

Section 2: General opinion of relocation

So to get an idea of your experiences of accompanied postings, how would you describe your overall experience of relocation?

Prompts: How would you describe your experiences overall? What were some positives aspects? What were some negative aspects?

Section 3: Employment

I'm now going to ask some questions about your employment during relocations.

Did you work before becoming Army wife? Did you have any expectations about how Army life might affect your career/work?

Could you tell me a bit about your experiences of working/looking for work during or after moving because of an accompanied posting?
Prompts: Were there barriers to finding or keeping work? What helped? Did you face challenges/ benefits to finding work specifically because you are an Army wife? For example, any issues that a woman with a civilian husband for example wouldn't experience? Could you tell me more about these?

Did you have to make any changes to your work or occupation as a result of accompanied postings? Or being a military wife? Did you feel your new job/s matched your experience or education? Did you get the hours you wanted?
WB: How did these experiences affect you? How did you feel during this time? What did you think/feel about these experiences? How did this make you feel?

Probe experiences pre-children vs after children and overseas vs UK

Did accompanied postings have any impact on your employment opportunities or career?
Prompts: Was this been a positive or negative impact? Could you tell me more about this? What did you think about these effects? Have they tried to seek out training? Were there any barriers/challenges with this?
WB: How did these experiences affect you? How did you feel during this time? What did you think/feel about these experiences? How did this make you feel?

Were there other things that affected your ability to work? How did you manage with childcare?
Prompts: Did you have other caring roles that impact on your ability to work? i.e. additional family needs that affected your ability to work e.g. child with learning difficulties/ disabilities? Could you tell me more about these?

Did you have other responsibilities such as volunteering, responsibilities in military community? Could you tell me more about this? Was this the same for women with husbands'/partners' of different ranks?
WB: How did these experiences affect you? How did you feel during this time? What did you think/feel about these experiences? How did this make you feel?

Did you have any money worries during any of the moves or because you were looking for work?
Prompts: Could you tell me more about these problems? Were you able to solve these problems? How were you able to do this?
WB: How did these experiences affect you? How did you feel during this time? What did you think/feel about these experiences? How did this make you feel?

Section 4a: Family relationships

I'm now going to ask you some questions about moving and family relationships. In particular, the relationship with your husband/partner and children, but also with family, friends and other Army wives/partners.

Was there anything about the move that affected your marriage/relationship?
Prompts: Did you experience any challenges or issues in your relationship because of accompanied postings/moves? Can you tell me a bit more about this? Better/worse?

Were your priorities the same during or after the move? i.e. school places, finding work
WB: How did these experiences affect you? How did you feel during this time? What did you think/feel about these experiences? How did this make you feel?

Did you notice any effects from moving because of new postings on other family members such as your children?
Prompts: What things did you notice? Was there any effect of the move on your relationship with your kids at all? Better/worse? Were there any particular problems for family members with additional needs?
WB: How did these experiences affect you? How did you feel during this time? What did you think/feel about these experiences? How did this make you feel?

Section 4b: Social networks/support

New postings can also mean moving away from people who support you like friends and family. Did you notice any effects on these relationships due to these types of moves?
Prompts: Can you tell me a bit more about this? What effect did postings have on your support network? How did you maintain contact with friends and family? Do you use social media at all? How did you find making friends on new postings? Where did you seek support from?

Friends, family relationships
WB: How did these experiences affect you? How did you feel during this time? What did you think/feel about these experiences? How did this make you feel?

What did you think about the support that the Army provides for families? How about other Army families/wives?
Prompts: What, if any, role did the Army to play in supporting you? Did you expect them to? How about other military partners?
WB: Have these been beneficial in any way?

Section 5: Transition

I'm now going to ask you some questions about transition and the effect this might have had on you.

General perception of transition process

Do you think that transition has had any impact on your marriage/relationship?
Prompts: Have you experienced any challenges or issues in your relationship because of partners' transition out of Service? Can you tell me a bit more about this? Better/worse?
WB: How has this affected you? How have these changes made you feel? What did you think/feel about these experiences?
Did you have any expectations about how transition might affect your career/work?

Can you tell me about your experiences of finding/keeping work during your partners' transition out of the military?
Prompts: Were there barriers to finding work? What helped? How has this been compared to when you were an "Army wife"?
Do you feel your new job/s has matched your experience or education? Have you got the hours you wanted?

Have you had to make any changes to your work or occupation as a result of transition? Have you tried to seek out training before or after transition? Were there barriers/challenges with this?
WB: How did these experiences affect you? How did you feel during this time? What did you think/feel about these experiences? How did this make you feel?

Has transition had any impact on your employment opportunities or career?
Prompts: Has this been positive or negative? Could you tell me more about this?
WB: How did these experiences affect you? How did you feel during this time? What did you think/feel about these experiences? How did this make you feel?

How have you managed with childcare after Service?
Prompts: Is access similar or different to time in Service?
WB: How did these experiences affect you? How did you feel during this time? What did you think/feel about these experiences? How did this make you feel?

Did you have any money worries during transition?
WB: How did these experiences affect you? How did you feel during this time? What did you think/feel about these experiences? How did this make you feel?

How was Army assistance during transition?

Section 6: Wrap-up

So, I'm going to start wrapping up our interview now.

From your experiences, are there any things you think would be helpful for military families that move due to changes to postings in the future? Transition?
Prompts: Do you have any recommendations for the Army to make this process easier? What works and what doesn't?

Have you ever heard of the AFF?
Prompts: Do you know what kind of work they do? Ever contacted them? What for? How helpful did you find them?

Is there anything else you would like to add? Or ask?

Thank them for their time, appreciate their honesty in answers.
NB: Bold indicates primary questions, italics indicates questions related to wellbeing, plain text indicates potential prompts

3.2.5 Sign-posting booklet for current and former military families

Signposting Information

General information on support

for current and veteran

UK military families

Participant Signposting Information Booklet – current and veteran UK military families v1.3 19 May 2015

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1. General support	
Army Families Federation	The Army Families Federation is the independent voice of Army families and works hard to improve the quality of life for Army families around the world. Has information on a range of issues affecting Army families, such as housing, health, education, childcare, army reserves, deployments, finances, employment & training and family life **Web:** www.aff.org.uk
Armed Forces Community Directory	Information on a range of available health, education, employment, housing, legal and welfare services for members of the Armed Forces community, including veterans by geographical area. **Web:** https://afcom.directory
Army of Angels	Provides assistance with household necessities, home alterations, equipment and respite care for veterans **Tel:** 01684 274 577 **Email:** info@armyofangels.org.uk **Web:** http://www.armyofangels.org.uk
Citizen's Advice	Information on a range of financial, health and education services for Armed Forces personnel, veterans and their families **Web:** www.adviceguide.org.uk
Civvy Street	Free online service supported by The Royal British Legion to help Service personnel transition into civilian life. Provides information, interactive services, resources and links to employers and service organisations. **Helpline:** 0800 169 4073 **Email:** info@civvystreet.org **Web:** www.civvystreet.org
Cobseo	Cobseo, the Confederation of Service Charities, provides details of charities providing services for members of the Armed Forces community, including veterans and their families. **Web:** www.cobseo.org.uk/member-organisations
Hive	Tri-Service information network offering range of advice to all members of the service community **Tel:** 01722 436498/9 **Email:** hivegb@hqland.army.mod.uk **Web:** www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support/welfare-support.aspx
Homefront Forces	Support for partners, parents and children of those in the Forces **Web:** www.homefrontforces.com
Naval Families Federation	A range of information for Royal Naval and Royal Marines families **Tel:** 02392 654374 **Web:** www.nff.org.uk
RAF Community Website	For RAF personnel and their families. Information on a wide range of topics, including family separation, housing and support groups **Web:** www.raf.mod.uk/community
RAF Families Federation	Information and support for RAF families **Tel:** 01780 781650 (Mon-Fri 10am-3pm) **Web:** www.raf-ff.org.uk
Rear Party	Online community for families and friends of military personnel **Web:** www.rearparty.co.uk **Forum:** www.rearparty.co.uk/Forums.html
Royal British Legion	The Royal British Legion helps serving members of the Armed Forces, ex-Service men and women (veterans), their families and dependants

	all year-round. **Tel:** 08457 725725 (Mon-Fri 10am-4pm) **Web:** www.britishlegion.org.uk
Royal Navy Community Website	For RN personnel and their families. Information on a wide range of topics, including family wellbeing, community support and support services as well as a help desk for advice **Web:** www.royalnavy.mod.uk/Community/Members-area
Squaddies Wives	Online forum for wives and girlfriends of Army personnel. Site for women only **Web:** www.squaddiewives.co.uk/forum/cmps_index.php
UK Government Veteran ServicesUK government	Information on a range of veteran services, pensions, compensation schemes and advice for those leaving Service **Web:** www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk
Veteran's Association UK	The Veteran's Association UK's provides to veterans, serving personnel and their families in accessing pensions, benefits, housing, treatment for mental or other health issues **Tel:** 01282 219391 **Email:** info@veteransassociationuk.com **Web:** www.veteransassociationuk.com **Email:** info@veteransassociationuk.com **Web:** www.veteransassociationuk.com **Facebook:** Veterans-Association-UK
2. Courses, education and employment	
Adult Learning Grant	Financial assistance to help adults back into education. Learner support helpline open 7am to 8pm. **Tel:** 0800 121 8989 Further source of financial help with childcare: **Web:**www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/AdultLearning/FinancialHelpForAdultLearners/index.htm
Army Benevolent Fund	Offers a range of financial grants for care in the home, holidays, bursaries, annuities and practical support to serving and ex-service personnel and their families. **Tel:** 020 7901 8900 **Email:** info@soldierscharity.org **Web:** www.soldierscharity.org
LifeWorks Families (RBL)	LifeWorks Families is a free support service to help military spouses and partners get the job they want. It is available to all spouses and partners of any serving (or recently discharged) member of the Armed Forces, including Reserves. **Web:** www.rbli.co.uk/employment_solutions/lifeworks
National Careers Service	The National Careers Service provides information, advice and guidance to help you make decisions on learning, training and work opportunities. The service offers confidential and impartial advice supported by qualified careers advisers. **Web:** nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk
RAF Benevolent Fund	For former RAF personnel or their families. Offers a wide range of practical, financial and emotional support. For those still serving, contact should be made through Chief Clerk or Flight Commander

	Tel: 0800 169 2942 **Web:** www.rafbf.org.uk
Recruit for Spouses	Recruit for Spouses is an independent social enterprise run by military spouses dedicated to helping spouses into employment by bridging the military and business communities **Email:** enquiries@recruitforspouses.co.uk **Web:** www.recruitforspouses.co.uk
Remploy	Remploy provides one-to-one career assistance to veterans transitioning into civilian careers, following injury, illness or disability. **Tel:** 0300 456 8110 **Email:** employmentservices.osc@remploy.co.uk **Web:** www.remploy.co.uk
Royal Navy Benevolent Trust	Offers a range of help, including grants and advice, for serving and ex-serving members of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines and their families, including those who are separated or divorced and now living with a new partner **Tel:** 02392 690112 or 660296 or 725841 **Email:** rnbt@rnbt.org.uk **Web:** www.rnbt.org.uk/
Sorted	Provides a range of employment services and support for Forces community (including spouses/partners and dependents) to find and stay in work after Service. **Tel:** 0800 319 6845 **Email:** info@sorted.org.uk **Web:** www.sorted.org.uk
Universal Jobmatch	Search and apply for full or part-time jobs in Great Britain and abroad **Web:** www.gov.uk/jobsearch
Unsung Heroes/ Dependants' Business Start-Up Programme	Free 10-month business start-up course and mentoring programme for Service Dependants of Armed Forces, veteran or reservist personnel, run by experienced and knowledgeable business advisors **Tel:** 0845 612 0707/0333 2020 996 **Email:** mod-enquiries@wlv.ac.uk **Web:** www.wlv.ac.uk/default.aspx?page=36282
3. Benefits and financial support	
Benefits	For information on government benefits, see www.gov.uk/browse/benefits
Citizens Advice Bureau	The Citizens Advice service helps people resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free, independent and confidential advice. The national centre can give you the number of your local office (tel: 020 7833 2181) **Web:** www.adviceguide.org.uk
Debt Advice Line	National Debtline is a free, independent and confidential debt advice service run by the charity Money Advice Trust. **Freephone:** 0808 808 4000 Leave a message to request an information pack or factsheet. Mon-Fri 9am-9pm (24-hour voicemail). **Web:** www.nationaldebtline.co.uk
MoneyForce	MoneyForce provides money and financial guidance for UK Service personnel and their families. **Web:** www.moneyforce.org.uk
Royal British Legion	The Royal British Legion Women's Section is an organisation for

Women's Section	women providing care and support to the Serving and ex-Service community. Assistance for women in financial hardship or in need of extra support. **Tel:** 0203 207 2181 **Email:** women@britishlegion.org.uk **Web:** www.rblws.org.uk/
SSAFA	SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association) provide practical support and assistance to servicemen and women, veterans, and the families of both. **Tel:** 020 7403 8783 (Mon-Fri 9.15am-5pm) **Web:** www.ssafa.org.uk
4. Housing	
Haig Homes	Provides housing assistance to ex-Service people and/or their families through affordable rents or tailored housing for severely wounded and disabled ex-Service personnel. **Tel:** 020 7685 5777 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm) **Email:** haig@haighomes.org.uk **Web:** www.haighomes.org.uk
Government Housing information	Information on the governments' Help to Buy scheme and housing benefit **Web:** www.communities.gov.uk/housing
SSAFA: Housing Advice	**Tel:** 01722 436400 (Mon-Fri 9.15am-5pm) **Web:** www.ssafa.org.uk
One More Move	Online resource to help military families get through each move. **Tel:** 01603 271827 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm) **Web:** onemoremove.co.uk
5. Support for Carers	
Carers UK	Carers UK provides information, advice and support for carers. **Tel:** 0808 808 7777 (Wed & Thurs 10-12am, 2-4pm) **Email:** advice@carersuk.org **Web:** www.carersuk.org/ **Support forum:** www.carersuk.org/support/online-support open 24hrs
6. Schools and childcare	
Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS)	Provides expert and impartial advice about the education of Service children, both in the UK and overseas. **Tel:** 01980 618244 (Mon-Fri 8.30am-3.30pm, answer phone service) **Email:** enquiries@ceas.detsa.co.uk **Web:** www.gov.uk/childrens-education-advisory-service
Childcare Voucher Scheme For civilian vouchers	You can receive part of your income as vouchers redeemable against childcare (but not school fees) **Web:** www.modchildcare.co.uk **UK 24 hour Freephone:** 0800 085 2875 **Canada:** 1 8669 230125 **Cyprus:** 800 92421 **Germany:** 0800 180 8980 **Other countries:** 00 44 (0) 1276 418880 **Email:** modcivilian@sodexhopass.co.uk **Web:** www.modchildcare.co.uk

For military vouchers	**UK 24 hour Freephone:** 0800 066 5075 **Canada:** 1 8669 30125 **Cyprus:** 800 92421 **Germany:** 0800 180 8980 **Other countries:** 00 44 (0) 1276 418880 **Email:** afcvs@sodexhopass.co.uk **Web:** www.modchildcare.co.uk
DirectGov	Governmental website with lots of information for parents. Topics include schooling, childcare, child maintenance and health. **Web:** www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/index.htm
MoD Oracle	An organisation independent of the Ministry of Defence which provides information for service personnel and their families - includes information on children's education **Tel:** 01737 642424 **Web:** www.modoracle.com
Nasen (Formerly the National Association for Special Educational Needs)	Promotes the education, training, advancement and development of all those with special and additional support needs **Tel:** 01827 311500 **Email:** welcome@nasen.org.uk **Web:** www.nasen.org.uk
NAFIS (National Association of Family Information Services)	A resource of children's, family and young people's services in your area which provide information, advice and assistance to parents and carers. **Tel:** 020 7953 4085 **Web:** www.familyinformationservices.org.uk
Ofsted	Prepares school inspection reports and provides information on childcare **Web:** www.ofsted.gov.uk
Service Children's Education	SCE is an agency of the MOD and is dedicated to the education of the children of Her Majesty's Armed Forces, MOD Personnel and sponsored organisations overseas **Tel:** 0049 (0) 2161 908 2294 **Email:** info@sceschools.com **Web:** www.sceschools.com
7. Mental Health	
Army Confidential Support Line	The CSL offers totally confidential, non-judgemental, guidance on all personal/welfare issues including sexual harassment, discrimination, bullying, racism, drugs, depression, alcohol, debt, relationship counselling and suicide to the Army community from anywhere in the world **Tel UK & Bosnia/Kosovo:** 0800 731 4880 **Cyprus:** 800 91065 **Germany:** 0800 1827 395 **Rest of the World*:** 0044 1980 630854 (*callback) 7 days a week from 10.30am -10.30pm (UK time)
Big White Wall	Anonymous support network that encourages you to be open about what is on your mind, to learn more about yourself and what is troubling you. Available 24/7 and free for serving personnel, veterans and their families. You can talk anonymously through your troubles with the whole community, or a selected group. Trained mental health professionals can help small groups of members resolve problems such as stress, anxiety and depression **Tel:** 020 7060 1677 **Email:** theteam@bigwhitewall.com **Web:** www.bigwhitewall.com

Combat Stress	Combat Stress provides clinical treatment and welfare support to Veterans who suffer from mental health problems **Helpline:** 0800 138 1619 **General enquiries:** 01372 587 000 **Email:** contactus@combatstress.org.uk **Web:** http://www.combatstress.org.uk
Cruse	Cruse supports people through bereavement. **Daytime helpline:** 0844 477 9400 **Email:** helpline@cruse.org.uk
MIND	Mind info-line offers a range of advice on mental health issues and also offers legal advice. The website also has links to a wide range of booklets and leaflets. **Tel:** 0845 766 0163 (Mon-Fri 9.15am-5.15pm) **Web:** www.mind.org.uk
NHS Choices Mental Health pages	Information on mental health problems **Web:** www.nhs.uk/livewell/mentalhealth/Pages/Mentalhealthhome.aspx Information about priority veteran healthcare available at www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Militaryhealthcare/Veteranshealthcare/Pages/veterans.aspx
NHS Direct	Call or email health professionals for advice about mental and physical health. 24hrs/365 days a year **Tel:** 111 (freephone) or 0845 4647 in some areas **Web:** www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
Royal British Legion	Provides financial, social and emotional support to all those who have served and are currently serving in the Armed Forces, as well as their families. **Tel:** 08457 725725 (Mon-Fri 10am-4pm) **Web:** www.britishlegion.org.uk
Samaritans	Someone to talk to 24 hours a day. Also offer face to face appointments in local branches. **Tel:** 08457 90 90 90 **Email:** jo@samaritans.org **Web:** www.samaritans.org
SSAFA Forcesline	Confidential support line completely independent of the military chain of command **From the UK:** 0800 731 4880 **From Germany:** 0800 1827 395 **From Cyprus:** 800 91065 **From the Falkland Islands #** 6111 **From anywhere in the world*:** +44 (0)1980 630854 (*staff phone back) **Web:** www.ssafa.org.uk
Veteran's Aid	One stop-shop for veterans in crisis. Support with housing, addiction and mental health. **Tel:** 0800 012 68 67/020 7828 2468 **Email:** info@veterans-aid.net **Web:** www.veterans-aid.net/contact-us
8. Alcohol and drugs	
Alcoholics Anonymous	**Tel:** 08457 697555 **Web:** www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/

Al-Anon	Provides support to anyone whose life is, or has been, affected by someone else's drinking. **Confidential helpline:** 020 7403 0888 (10am-10pm 365 days) **Northern Ireland:** 028 9068 2368 (Mon-Fri 10am-1pm, Mon-Sun, 6pm-11pm) **Scotland:** 0141 339 8884 (10am - 10pm, 365 days) **Email:** enquiries@al-anonuk.org.uk **Web:** www.al-anonuk.org.uk/
Drinkline	Free, confidential information and advice on alcohol. **Tel:** 0800 917 8282 (Mon-Fri, 9am-11pm, England and Wales only)
National Drugs Helpline - FRANK	Confidential service to speak to a professionally trained advisor about drugs. **Tel:** 0800 77 66 00 (24hrs/365 days a year) **Web:** www.talktofrank.com
9. Relationships and families	
Army Families Federation	Helps serving military families sort out range of problems. Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm **Tel:** 01980 615525 **Web:** www.aff.org.uk/
Army Welfare Service	Offers professional and confidential welfare support service for servicemen and women and their families **Tel:** 01722 436569 **Web:** www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support/family/default.aspx **Email:** LF-AWS-Welfareinformationservice@mod.uk **Post:** The Army Welfare Information Service, HQ Landforces, Louisburg Block, Erskine Barracks, Wilton, Salisbury SP2 0AG
Refuge	Refuge offers a range of services which gives women and children access to professional support whatever their situation. **24 hour Freephone:** 0808 2000 247 **Web:** www.refuge.org.uk
Relate	Offers phone counselling, internet counselling and/or appointments for face to face counselling. Sessions available for Army couples through Army Welfare Services. **Tel:** 0845 130 4016 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm) **Web:** www.relate.org.uk
Relate for Parents	Free support, ideas, guidance and information **Tel:** 0300 100 1234 **Email:** relateforparents@relate.org.uk **Web:** relateforparents.org.uk
Working Families	Helping children, working parents and carers and their employers find a better balance between responsibilities at home and work **Freephone helpline (low income families)**: 0800 013 0313 **Tel:** 020 7253 7243 **Email:** advice@workingfamilies.org.uk **Web:** workingfamilies.org.uk
Women's Aid	Domestic violence helpline providing information and support for women and children experiencing domestic and sexual abuse. **24 hour Freephone:** 0808 2000 247 **Web:** www.womensaid.org.uk

A fuller list of services can be found at

www.kcl.ac.uk/kcmhr/participants/Signposting-Booklet.pdf

3.2.6 Risk protocol

RISK PROTOCOL

How do accompanied postings affect the wellbeing of women with partners' in the UK Armed Forces?

Study Number: **XXXXXXX**

This protocol will be implemented if the interviewer becomes concerned about the participant, either as a result of the interview or when the participant makes contact with the study (e.g. via the study office).

Concerns might be raised if a participant:

- appears very distressed, asks for help or reports mental health symptoms
- volunteers that they are feeling suicidal, desperate or very unwell
- talks about causing injury or harm to someone else
- talks about causing injury or harm to a child (or other child protection issues e.g. knowledge that someone else is hurting a child)
- talks about a crime (dealt with on a case by case basis)

In the event of any of the above, the PhD student will inform their supervisors in a timely manner. A decision will be then be made about whether to contact the Medical Officer for this project, Col Peter McAllister. Any information about such cases will be shared via password protected files within the research team.

DRAFT

Risk event form

Participant number:	Researcher name:	Date this form completed:	Date concern arose:
Brief description of the presenting problem or disclosure			
Clinical call back: - Has participant been offered a call back? YES ☐ NO ☐ - If yes, did participant accept call back? YES ☐ NO ☐ [If NO, ask why and record below]			
- Is call back urgent? 1 HIGH RISK - SAME DAY 2 3 LOW RISK - WITHIN 48 HRS.			
What has the patient been advised by the RA? [e.g. signposting leaflet /website/MO/GP/await clinical call back]			
Best contact number for participant: [mobile/home/work] Best contact time for participant: Alternative number: [friend/partner etc]			
Next action: *[detail process of informing clinician of events, use continuation sheet if necessary]*			

DRAFT

Date passed to Medical Officer ……..
Researcher…… Signed…….. **Date……**
Further information if needed

DRAFT

3.2.7 Interview data collection sheet

General questions for interview participants – Participant no/name:

Consent		
I have read the information sheet dated July 2014 that explains the study and why you would like to interview me	Yes	No
I have had the opportunity to ask any questions I may have about the study	Yes	No
I understand the purpose of the study and am happy to take part	Yes	No
I understand that the information I give you will remain confidential and will only be seen by the research team. I understand that my name will not be used in the reporting of the research at any time	Yes	No
I understand that my participation is voluntary and I can change my mind and leave the study at any time without giving a reason	Yes	No
I am happy for the interview to be recorded	Yes	No
I am happy for direct quotes from the interview to be used in the reports arising from this study	Yes	No
Please state name and date		
About them		
Age		
*Married/in relationship with currently serving member of the Armed Forces		
How long have they been married/in relationship		
Partner in Service the whole length of relationship?		
Come from a military family?		
Employed?		
Occupation		
FT or PT? Self-employed		
About their family		
Number of children/names		
Age of children		
About their partner		
Name		
Rank		
How long have they served		
About relocation		
*Have you had to move in last 5 years because of change to partners' posting		
When was the last time you moved because of a new posting?		
How many of these relocations have you been through? Over how many years?		
Were any overseas? How many? How about in the UK? How many?		

*Must answer yes to these questions to be eligible for the study

3.2.8 Ethics committee approval

NHS
Health Research Authority
NRES Committee London - Dulwich
Health Research Authority
Skipton House
80 London Road
London
SE1 6LH

24 June 2015

Dr Nicola T Fear
Reader in Epidemiology
King's College London
King's College London, IoP
Weston Education Centre
Cutcombe Road
SE5 9RJ

Dear Dr Fear

Study title: The Welfare of Children of Military Fathers
REC reference: 08/H0808/27
Amendment number: AM5.3
Amendment date: 19 May 2015
IRAS project ID:

The above amendment was reviewed by the Sub-Committee in correspondence.

Ethical opinion

The members of the Committee taking part in the review gave a favourable ethical opinion of the amendment on the basis described in the notice of amendment form and supporting documentation.

Approved documents

The documents reviewed and approved at the meeting were:

Document	*Version*	*Date*
Letters of invitation to participant	1.5	19 May 2015
Notice of Substantial Amendment (non-CTIMP)	AM5.3	19 May 2015
Other [Interview Topic Schedule - accompanied postings]	1.3	19 May 2015
Other [Interview Topic Schedule - unaccompanied postings]	1.3	19 May 2015
Other [Signposting Information -current and former Army families]	1.3	19 May 2015
Other [Signposting Information -current and ex-Service military families]	1.3	19 May 2015
Other [Summary of changes]		
Participant consent form	1.3	19 May 2015
Participant information sheet (PIS)	1.5	19 May 2015
Research protocol or project proposal	5.3 v 1.2	19 May 2015

Membership of the Committee

The members of the Committee who took part in the review are listed on the attached sheet.

R&D approval

All investigators and research collaborators in the NHS should notify the R&D office for the relevant NHS care organisation of this amendment and check whether it affects R&D approval of the research.

Statement of compliance

The Committee is constituted in accordance with the Governance Arrangements for Research Ethics Committees and complies fully with the Standard Operating Procedures for Research Ethics Committees in the UK.

We are pleased to welcome researchers and R & D staff at our NRES committee members' training days – see details at http://www.hra.nhs.uk/hra-training/

08/H0808/27:	**Please quote this number on all correspondence**

Yours sincerely

pp Ali Hussain

Dr Michael Philpot
Chair

E-mail: nrescommittee.london-dulwich@nhs.net

Enclosures: *List of names and professions of members who took part in the review*

NRES Committee London - Dulwich

Attendance at Sub-Committee of the REC meeting on 30 June 2015

Committee Members:

Name	*Profession*	*Present*	*Notes*
Dr Joanne Lawson	Civil Servant	Yes	
Dr Michael Philpot	Consultant Psychiatrist	Yes	

Also in attendance:

Name	*Position (or reason for attending)*
Mr Ali Hussain	REC Assistant

3.3 Qualitative analysis

3.3.1 Thematic framework

Post-familiarisation

Based on interview schedule questions and coding of all transcripts

1 Background
1.1 Personal details – age, marital status, length of marriage
1.2 Employment details – employed, FT/PT, occupation
1.3 Partner's military details – rank, length of Service, serving status

2 Relocations
2.1 Details of moves
2.2 Overview of moves
2.3 Benefits of moves
2.4 Challenges of moves
2.5 Effect on wellbeing
2.6 Housing
2.7 Schools
2.8 Life events – deployment, births, deaths

3 Employment
3.1 Perceptions of how employment might be affected
3.2 Impact on career
3.3 Challenges/barriers to employment
3.4 Facilitators to employment
3.5 Spouse education / training
3.6 Childcare
3.7 Finances
3.8 Effect on wellbeing

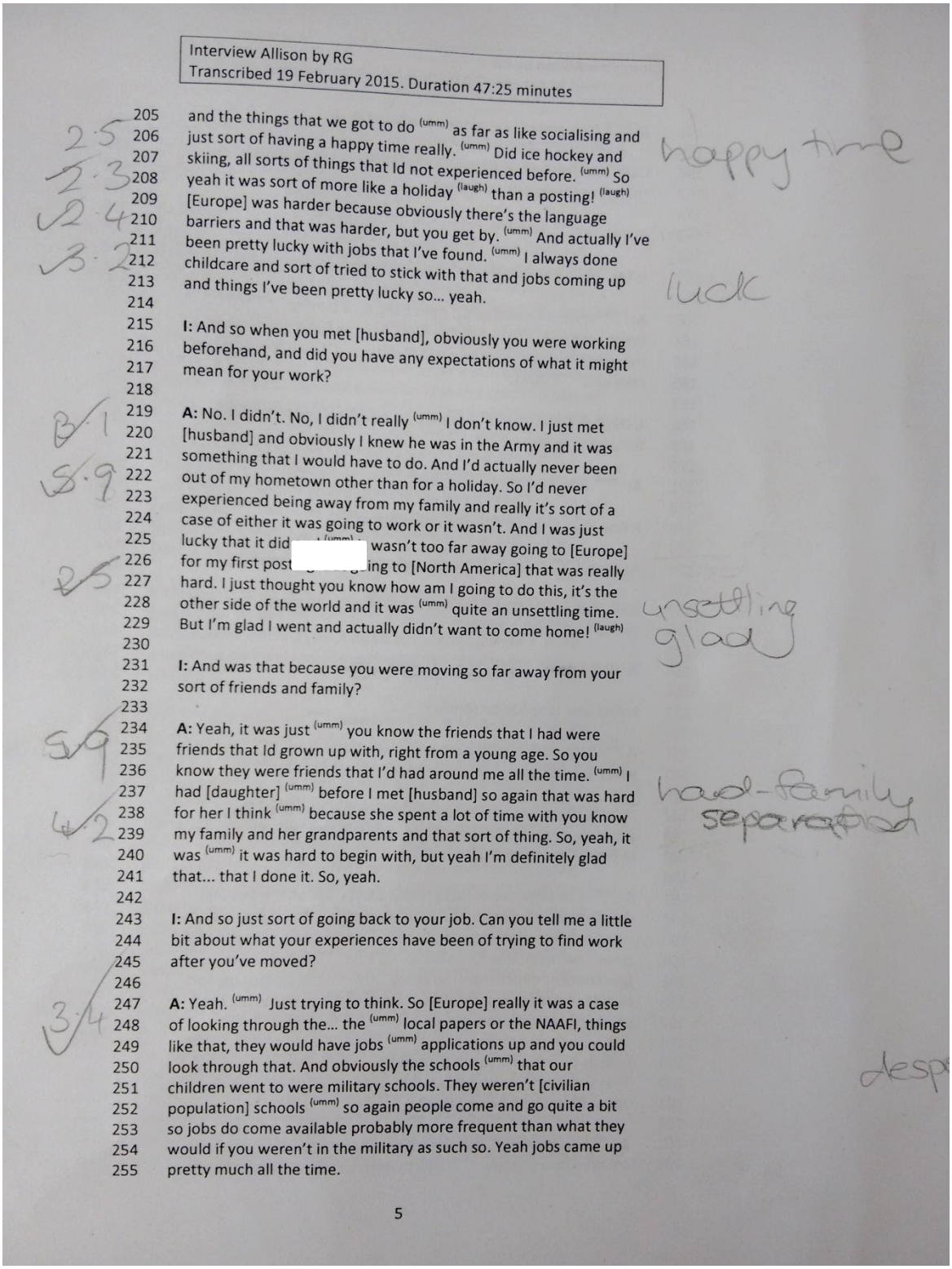
4 Family relationships (nuclear)
4.1 Effect of moves on partner / relationship with partner
4.2 Effect of moves on children / relationship with children
4.3 Effect on wellbeing

5 Social networks
5.1 Military community responsibilities
5.2 Support from family
5.3 Support from friends
5.4 Support from other military S/Ps
5.5 Support from military
5.6 Effect on wellbeing
5.7 Support from civilians
5.8 Effect of moves on relationships with family
5.9 Effect of moves on relationships with friends
5.10 Family responsibilities (future)

6 Transition
6.1 Military support
6.2 Employment / training
6.3 Effect on family
6.4 Support from family
6.5 Support from friends
6.6 Childcare
6.7 Finances
6.8 Effect on wellbeing
6.9 Reasons for leaving

7 Recommendations
7.1 General recommendations
7.2 Specific recommendations

3.3.2 Example of indexing



Interview Allison by RG
Transcribed 19 February 2015. Duration 47:25 minutes

and the things that we got to do (umm) as far as like socialising and just sort of having a happy time really. (umm) Did ice hockey and skiing, all sorts of things that Id not experienced before. (umm) So yeah it was sort of more like a holiday (laugh) than a posting! (laugh) [Europe] was harder because obviously there's the language barriers and that was harder, but you get by. (umm) And actually I've been pretty lucky with jobs that I've found. (umm) I always done childcare and sort of tried to stick with that and jobs coming up and things I've been pretty lucky so... yeah.

I: And so when you met [husband], obviously you were working beforehand, and did you have any expectations of what it might mean for your work?

A: No. I didn't. No, I didn't really (umm) I don't know. I just met [husband] and obviously I knew he was in the Army and it was something that I would have to do. And I'd actually never been out of my hometown other than for a holiday. So I'd never experienced being away from my family and really it's sort of a case of either it was going to work or it wasn't. And I was just lucky that it did [redacted] wasn't too far away going to [Europe] for my first post [redacted]ing to [North America] that was really hard. I just thought you know how am I going to do this, it's the other side of the world and it was (umm) quite an unsettling time. But I'm glad I went and actually didn't want to come home! (laugh)

I: And was that because you were moving so far away from your sort of friends and family?

A: Yeah, it was just (umm) you know the friends that I had were friends that Id grown up with, right from a young age. So you know they were friends that I'd had around me all the time. (umm) I had [daughter] (umm) before I met [husband] so again that was hard for her I think (umm) because she spent a lot of time with you know my family and her grandparents and that sort of thing. So, yeah, it was (umm) it was hard to begin with, but yeah I'm definitely glad that... that I done it. So, yeah.

I: And so just sort of going back to your job. Can you tell me a little bit about what your experiences have been of trying to find work after you've moved?

A: Yeah. (umm) Just trying to think. So [Europe] really it was a case of looking through the... the (umm) local papers or the NAAFI, things like that, they would have jobs (umm) applications up and you could look through that. And obviously the schools (umm) that our children went to were military schools. They weren't [civilian population] schools (umm) so again people come and go quite a bit so jobs do come available probably more frequent than what they would if you weren't in the military as such so. Yeah jobs came up pretty much all the time.

5

I: So that was within the sort of military community, especially when you were overseas?

A: Yeah, definitely. [North America] I didn't work because I was pregnant with [son] (umm) so [North America] maybe it probably would have been a more of a struggle I should think (umm) to find work.

I: And why do you think that might have been?

A: I think because (umm) like when they were out in [North America], [daughter] went to an actual [civilian population] school. It wasn't to do with military as such, probably the community was more (umm) it was like a [North American] military (umm) community. So (umm) yeah I don't know. I don't really know experiences as far as job-wise in [North America] because I never... I never had to search so (umm) a lot of (umm) friends that I know would work in maybe the nursery or the schools and get in that way. (umm) But I'm not sure as much as their shops and things like that how easier it would have been, I don't know.

I: And then how about when you've come back to the UK? Have you been looking for work since you've been back here?

A: Yeah, so then (umm) (umm) my next UK posting was [XXXX] (umm) and again a job came up (umm) didn't really have to look, it just came up in one of [son]'s school newsletters. (umm) So the pre-school which was right next door (umm) and I went for an interview and I got that. (umm) So that was the job that I had there. (umm) And then when I moved to [XXXX] it was looking on the council website and just looking for jobs in schools and applying there. It took... probably started to look the November as soon as we got here (umm) and then I went for an interview, I think it was the March (umm) it was actually for a carer's role (umm) in the special needs school. (umm) I didn't get that and I think they already had somebody doing it, so but they said they'd love me as supply. And (umm) I got in that way and then I applied for a job and I got it so...

I: So it's been... you haven't found it too difficult to sort of find work?

A: No. And especially... I've not had to just... because I got to the point where I thought 'Oh should I just do anything?' and then I sort of kept at it and (umm) yeah and it came up. So... because sometimes I think you get desperate where you just think 'Oh should I just do anything?' you know work in a shop or... but again you have to fit around your children, you know fitting round [son]. I haven't got a family around to say "Oh can you pick [son] up from school?" you know and that sort of thing so... you do have to

Interview Allison by RG
Transcribed 19 February 2015. Duration 47:25 minutes

(umm) you know fit round them which is harder than what it would be if you lived at home I suppose.

I: Just because you don't maybe have close family around?

A: That's right, you know I haven't... you know a lot of grandparents don't they, they help out with picking up from school or you know helping out and stuff. But you know I haven't got that so it really is that you've got to sort of work it around and try and figure it out for yourself really. And he doesn't go to a local school (umm) I have to drive him there so... (umm) yeah.

I: So you've sort of mentioned there that having help with childcare is maybe something that makes finding work a little bit difficult. Are there other things that you have found that, either when you're trying to find work or keeping work going, that have been a bit difficult?

A: (umm) Yes sometimes obviously because you know you have like (umm) if [son] has inset days or if he's off sick, again you know you haven't got people to sort of help out and ask. (umm) Or if you've got training days after work again then that's difficult. (umm) You know [husband] is very good and his work's very good so sometimes they, you know he can come home from earlier to pick him up and things. But again that's... that's tricky as well so, yeah.

I: And what about he's not able to do that? Do you have people you can sort of rally around?

A: (umm) Yeah I do have... I'm quite lucky because where we live there's two other children that are in [son]'s class that go to the same school. (umm) So at the moment (umm) they're being really good because obviously I've had my [operation], (umm) [husband] has gone back to work so they've been very good and one picks him up in the morning and takes and the other one brings him back. So again you know if I didn't have them then [husband] would have to come out of work to go and get him and to bring him back. So yeah.

I: Ok. So what about maybe some things that have helped you find work? You've said it's been... you have found it quite easy. Have there been any things that have sort of helped you to find work?

A: (umm) Well obviously the use of the internet (umm) and that sort of thing and again you know like newsletters, (umm) local newspapers, that sort of thing. That's what I've used to look.

I: Ok. And the jobs that you've got have you been... do you feel that they have matched your experience, your training that you've had?

had

work it out for self

Support

A: Yeah, definitely.

I: Yeah so you're quite happy in the roles that you've got?

A: Yeah. The only one... probably that didn't so much was when we first moved. I worked in (umm) it was a boarding school in [Europe] for military children (umm) and I worked in the kitchens there. And even though I loved it, it's not something that I'd done before. (umm) But yeah I really enjoyed it, but all the others I was definitely afterwards I would say is what I've always done since I've left school and that's childcare. So yeah.

I: Ok and were you able to sort of get the hours that you wanted? Obviously working around the kids, obviously, but?

A: Yeah definitely. Again it's just always (umm) I found it a bit tricky (umm) the beginning of this year because they were deciding to change the LSA hours which would mean I would have to put [son] into breakfast club, (umm) it then meant I would have to put [son] into afterschool club. And you can't just pay up until you want it, you have to pay till six o'clock. And obviously when I went for the job it (umm) it wasn't anything that I wanted to do with [son]. I didn't want him in breakfast and afterschool clubs because I think that their days are long enough as it is. So I obviously explained all that and they were very good cause (umm) we're due posting... we get posted in July (umm) so they know this so they just said that they were happy for me to do the hours that I'm doing until I finish so... I was lucky in that way.

I: Yeah, so they've been quite supportive really?

A: Yeah, definitely. And it's not... you know I'm the only military (umm) wife there so there... it's not like they're even sort of used to having (umm) you know people that (umm) are married to military... you know a soldier or whatever so... yeah they have been very good!

I: So just sort of coming back to the fact that you are an Army wife, do you think that you've faced any challenges or there's been any benefits to finding work because of who you happen to be married to?

A: (umm) No, not really. (umm) Again everywhere we've been before they... they're used to (umm) you know it's a big military (umm) sort of environment. So they're used to you know people coming and going and they know they could get posted a year later, you know, they know when they're employing that that's what could happen. (umm) Really again the only place that have... I haven't had that is here. (umm) But again you know I explained that in my interview and they were fine with it so... yeah.

3.3.3 Example of charting

N	Pseudonym	3.7 Finances	Elements
1	**Allison**	Not really any money worries from moves. Get used to a certain income each month and have to adjust to new income. Try to put things in place so you have some money aside while S/P is looking for work. Been lucky and have borrowed from both parents if they have needed extra money, that's who they would ask, lucky they have a good set of parents. Although Army pays for most of school fees, still need to find remainder and any extras, things you have to pay for and can't stop. No effect from cost of moves, allowance covers what is needed. *Well-being* *Do worry as get used to a certain amount each month and wonder if you will find work or when you can start looking. Gets quite anxious in period between jobs, have bills to pay.*	- no real money worries (1) - get used to certain income each month, have to adjust to new income (1) - try to put money aside so have some while looking for work (1) - been lucky and borrowed from parents when they have needed to (1) - Army pays for most of school fees but still need to find remainder as well as extras (1) - relocation allowance covers what is needed, no effect from moves (1) *Well-being* *- trying to find work causes worry, get used to income, wonder if she will find anything and when she can start (1)* *- get anxious when between jobs as have bills to pay (1)*
2	**Anna**	Career taken into account during moves as contributes to income. Finances not a reason for working.	- career taken into account during moves as contributes to income (2) - finances not a reason for working (2)
3	**Carrie**	First job after leaving Service was intern job for no pay. Didn't have her own money. Lucky they had no money worries as a result of moves or being out of work, always been a saver and had military pension. Always careful, still able to go on holidays and stuff. *Well-being* *Didn't like not having own money coming in.*	- first job after leaving Service was intern post with no pay (3) - didn't have her own money (3) - luckily had no money worries from moves or her being out of work (3) - always been a saver, careful with money (3) - had her military pensions (3) - still able to afford luxuries like holidays (3) *Well-being* *- didn't like not having own money coming in (3)*
4	**Courtney**	Recent policy changes to pay mean schools now decide pay & conditions for teachers. Despite her experience and being at top of pay band in previous job, now on basic rate. Could happen every move, has consequences for pension. At top of pay band now but conscious she has another 2 years before husband moves and she may take another pay cut. Has impact on family finances, thinking of re-mortgaging house as know she will not be working for a period of time when they are move next and she may not be able to contribute financially, may not be able to afford paying off the same amount. Not well off in Europe, but comfortable, she earned a good wage and her husband was earning. When moved back to UK, found this a "quite a hit" financially due to pay cuts, budgets and currency changes - "hand to mouth in a way" for the first year, using what they were earning. Not able to save or "treat" themselves to holidays or anything similar. Knew move was coming so not concerned about cost of	- recent policy changes have impacted her pay grade (4) - was getting basic rate despite skills and experience, could happen now with every move (4) - at top of pay band now but has another 2 years before husband is posted and may take another pay cut (4) - impacts on family finances, has consequences for her pension (4) - may need to adjust mortgage now as she will not work for a period after they move, may not contribute financially (4) - financially comfortable in Europe, she earned a good wage and had husband's salary (4) - took quite a hit moving back to UK, pay cuts and currency changes, hand to mouth for first year, using what they were earning, not saving, no extras for holidays (4) - knew about move beforehand so not concerned, did a lot of saving to replace items, saved her income and lived off husband's (4)

		move, had a lot of warning. Did a lot of saving in Europe because they may have to replace things once back in UK as their things had been in storage. Saved her wage and lived off husband's income so they had money to update things when they got back. Need income from her job to live comfortably. *Well-being* *"Hard to take" being put down to basic pay rate in current job after years of experience. Feels employed on the cheap, could always happen, a "big deal" for her. Feels "quite negatively" about pay as has taken on extra responsibility to get back to top of pay band and conscious that she will realistically have to take another pay cut in 2 years when he is posted. More about valuing what you are, upsetting to have experience and be paid what a new teacher would get - "pretty appalling". Only blames government for this, just the situation. Not being able to work when they move is a worry, a concern for financial situation, may not be able to contribute financially in the same way as now. Move back to UK affected them both. Husband's job not quite what he thought and she was in job where she had pay cut and felt "devalued". Felt down about things because they couldn't go on holidays, couldn't go away, very tight for a year and adjusting to being back in UK. Not depressed but down, adapting to UK difficult due in part to financial situation.*	- need income from her job to live comfortably (4) *Well-being* *- hard to take being on basic wage given experience and skills (4)* *- employed on the cheap, a big deal for her, could always happen from now on (4)* *- feels negatively about pay as took on extra responsibility to get back to pay band grade and may lose this again in move, blames government (4)* *- pretty appalling to not be valued based on experience (4)* *- not being able to work when they move causes financial concerns, may not be able to contribute financially in the same way (4)* *- move back to UK made them both quite low, felt devalued in job, financially difficult time, difficult to adapt to moving back to UK from overseas due in part to financial worries (4)*
5	**Dee**	Something went wrong with allowance for children coming back from Brunei, allowance went down on return to UK, had to get rid of things they had brought overseas. Not entitled to jobseekers as husband works, couldn't claim independently, unfair as she has always worked. Disturbance allowance sometimes doesn't cover the cost of moves outside the UK, ok in UK. Coming back from overseas, they had to buy a car, new utilities, household linens because they couldn't bring them back. Struggled coming back to UK. Had to take an advance of pay to cover these costs. *Well-being* *Struggled financially coming back to UK, cost of moving and struggle made them want to be back in Middle East as easier over there, more relaxed lifestyle, difficult in UK.*	- allowance for children changed when returned from overseas, reduction in finances, had to get rid of things from overseas (5) - not entitled to job seekers allowance as husband works, couldn't claim, unfair (5) - relocation allowance doesn't sometimes cover the cost of moves outside the UK, ok within UK (5) - had a lot of additional expenses moving back from overseas, struggled (5) - had to take advance of pay to cover these costs (5) *Well-being* *- financial struggles on return to UK made them want to be back overseas, more relaxed lifestyle, easier there (5)*

Appendix 4: Results of qualitative analyses

4.1 Qualitative results - S/P experiences of employment during accompanied postings and the influences on well-being

Table 37: S/P experiences of the impact of accompanied postings on their career

Categories	Dimensions	Elements
No or minimal effect	No effect	- no impact in Europe as worked and trained there (13)
	Found work	- hasn't found it too hard to find work (1) - never had a career break, always worked (2) - has always worked in every posting, usually low-skilled work (5) - always worked, work a huge, important part of her Army life (7) - always found work wherever they have gone (16) - hasn't had trouble finding work (19)
	Got hours she wanted	- able to get the hours she wanted (1) - able to get hours she wanted (2) - able to get hours she wants (11)
	Able to maintain career	- all jobs bar one in same area she has worked in (1) - jobs have matched experience and training (1) - able to stay at same grade (2) - moves more of an inconvenience, her career taken into account (2) - career not affected as does a similar job to the one she did before married, didn't damage it (7) - jobs have matched skills and experience (11) - job matches experience and qualifications (18)
Positive	Challenge &	- moves provide a challenge to her career, stretches her career wise which wouldn't have happened otherwise (4)

impacts	variety	- made career more interesting as she did different jobs, added variety to career (7) - new post will be doing roles that she hasn't done in a while and is looking forward to (9) - positive effect on career, has had great jobs (16) - has had great jobs, promotions and experience in work (16)
	Increased knowledge	- because of work history has more diverse knowledge than others in the same area (17)
Career disruption	Career progression	- hasn't made much progress as kept on temporary contracts as employer knows you are going to leave (6) - offered permanent position in current location but career would still be limited (6) - no continuity in roles (6) - career has been fragmented and muddled because of moves (6) - fragmented in that can't get past a certain level on pay scale (6) - worked after one move and managed to get a promotion at the time but lucky to get this (9) - harder to move into management positions if moving frequently (10) - couldn't advance in career as promises of training never came through as she would move again (15) - hasn't continued employment, kept hand in (18) - would have had a career if she hadn't moved around but also had children so doesn't know how far she would have gone (19)
	Paused career	- will have chance to focus on career when husband leaves Service (6) - has to put faith in future that when he leaves Services she will be able to find work, can't look until he leaves (6) - can settle once he leaves and won't have to move again (6) - saw overseas postings as a break from work, easier for officers wives to do this because of finances (12) - had to wait for career, more of a SATM than she would have been (12) - her time now to progress with career she has always wanted, husband due out soon (16)
	Adapted career	- had to take one job in area different from usual area (1) - has had to adapt roles herself and take on roles she hasn't done before in areas that are not her speciality so she could work (6)

		- worked in different areas (15)
	Underemployed/ overqualified	- got job at intern level below her experience, too easy, not challenging (3) - had to take a newly qualified position as this is the only job available in the area she works in and wants to work (9) - new job is for newly qualified post, underemployed (9) - doing work below her qualification level (10) - has taken step down in current job, misqualified (17) - working at a lower level than what she was previously (19) - can't apply for jobs at level she was at because she will move again (19) - frequent moves meant it wasn't practical to get a job at the same level as previous jobs (19)
	Competition with husband's career	- took redundancy, her choice to leave Service, husband didn't make her (3) - MIL commented that his job was more important (6) - in similar unit to husband in Army, couldn't be managed by him once married (8) - lots of compromises in her career because she is a S/P (9) - husband's job more important than hers at this time (10) - can't both be vying for something, someone has to give up something (10) - end up with focus on husband's career which affects yours (11)
Career planning	Career ambition	- wants more for herself (6) - not hugely ambitious in career (12) - not that keen on career (18) - not a career woman (19)
	Career path	- grabbed every opportunity to work but hasn't involved active choice (6) - lack of career path, no plan (6) - may be difficult to explain career path to future employers (6) - never felt on a career path (12) - moves come at the cost of a professional life (12)

		- made moves work for her career wise but always a little harder to get where she wanted (12)
	Jobs vs. a career	- taken jobs wherever they have moved to rather than something she would like to do or be career-wise (6) - has no career, gets bits and bobs of jobs, maternity leave cover (9) - found work when moving but jobs rather than a career (12) - few years of scrabbling around for work (12) - can find work but doesn't have a career right now (19)
Work versus family	Prioritisation of family vs career	- after Army, thought she would go into business but had children and felt one of them should be static due to moves (3) - didn't feel it was right to be a serving mother, still new when she left, could be deployed, bound her down to not being able to work properly (3) - left Service when she found out she was pregnant as knew they wouldn't be posted together, they didn't want to be separated or unaccompanied (8) - career second place to family, if focused on career, wouldn't have been able to move with husband, would have been split as a family (10) - couldn't see herself as a serving mother with deployments and duties (12) - career not a priority after having children (15)
	Choice to have a family	- made decision to leave Service and raise children, sort of forced into it but didn't have to have children (8) - made decision to have family rather than career (11) - could have stayed in Army but wanted a family, didn't want to stay (12) - chose to be a fulltime mother, didn't work when children young, not so problematic (18) - wanted to be a good mum, for her that was being FT mother (18)
	Family restrictions	- did resettlement on leaving Army but then had children and was SP, opportunities for career got messed up, didn't happen (3) - as a mother, her education/employment goes on the back burner, family comes first, had to make children the priority (11) - career never going to be straightforward because of children (19)

NB Numbers following summaries refer to numbers assigned to participants for purposes of analyses

Table 38: S/P experiences of facilitators to employment and education during accompanied postings

Categories	Dimensions	Elements
None	None	- nothing to do with being S/P helped find work (2)
Characteristics and contacts	Desire to work	- difficult posting during maternity leave, wanted to back to work (2) - wasn't looking forward to move on maternity, didn't have structure of work, didn't like area, really wanted to get back to work (2) - really wanted to go back to work (6) - took jobs because she wanted to work although wouldn't have taken them in UK (7) - felt the need to work because she's always worked (7) - realised being a stay at home mother wasn't for her (12) - wanted to go back to work (15)
	Personality	- positive person, can see there will be other opportunities for finding great jobs (6) - looks for positive in situations, moves depend how you approach things mentally (11) - confident person which helped in interviews (15) - has high work ethic (16) - ability to adapt is something she is good at, an opportunist, able to project herself (16) - has positive attitude to finding work, something will come along (16) - has point to prove to employers (16)
	Persistence and seizing opportunities	- kept searching and eventually found work (1) - kept trying to find work (3) - grabbing opportunities helped find work (6) - ballsy and gutsy in asking for opportunities, that's her personality, made things work for her (12) - read that assessment would be provided for officers on certain training course, asked if she could be assessed as well (12) - has chance to go back to previous job in upcoming move but will be applying for anything available (16)
	Military networks	- military schools children attended often had jobs that came up as people moved around, jobs came up all the time (1) - invited to teach soldier's basic skills and got job in Army education centre, asked to teach other skills to soldiers (12) - asked to

		teach other skills to soldiers (12)
	Community networks	- offered work in different role after interview (1) - got supply work in local school and then got offered a job through this, easy to find work this way (4) - had left work on good terms, had kept in touch with colleagues (9) - was parent helper at school at community school and got offered position covering for TAs (10) - did supply work which turned into short term contract and then a further job (10) - job came up through children's school (12) - temporary jobs have lead onto more permanent work (16) - being in work opens up doors to work (17)
Job search	Job search methods	- when overseas looked for jobs on internet, local papers, in NAAFI (1) - when in UK found work through school newsletter (1) - looked for other UK work through websites (1) - internet and newspaper helpful for finding work (1) - found jobs through Family Association (7) - looked at job market when back in UK (12) - did agency work so she could pick and choose work around her availability and family needs as husband not always around (15) - joined agency to find work (16) - found work through GLSU (17) - uses usual websites to find work as looking in civilian schools (19)
Postings	Settling down	- people are more willing to give her a job now as they have their own house now and know they won't be moving anytime soon as she tells them, more employable (8)
	Longer postings	- longer postings help with finding work, in one place longer (11)
	Location of	- being out at work means she doesn't see posting which is described by others as boring, horrible (1) - husband role means they are based largely in one area of the UK (2)

	posting	- prepared to commute (2) - chosen to live in places where the commute is balanced for both her and her husband (2)
Skills & experience	Volunteering, trials	- worked for military charity (3) - volunteers one day a week at local school, in PTA (10) - had same position in voluntary position over 3 moves and used experiences from postings and military life (11) - volunteered overseas, met people this way (12) - worked in HIVE and used experiences to help other SPSs (12) - voluntary positions got her seen by people, could learn new skills or improve old ones (16) - volunteered to get back into the workforce, not too much pressure from people's expectations because you aren't being paid (18)
	Skills and experience	- had wider practical skills rather than academic that helped find work (7) - did well in interview (7) - current job a stepping stone to workforce, will give her up to date references as hasn't worked for a long time, good to get back in the habit of working again (8) - CV didn't seem to stop her, got jobs she wanted because she was overqualified and other people move too (12) - used experience as S/P in last few jobs (16) - has experience in a range of different areas which lead to different jobs (16) - done well at work (16) - minor jobs got her seen by people, could learn new skills or improve old ones (16) - has a lot of different jobs and resumes which say the same thing, CV reflects wide-reaching experience (16) - has a skillset which helps, different for those who don't have easily transferable skills (19)
	Career planning	- put career before marriage (2) - decided not to marry until had reached a position in her career where she had transferable skills and higher enough grade (2) - decided what she wanted to do and did groundwork for it (14) - searched local areas to find positions where could work and train, trialled places (14)
	Education &	- completed training overseas by distance learning (12)

	training	- did typing course on posting where she couldn't work or it was short posting (12) - used time overseas to improve her skills, wouldn't have had time in UK if working (12) - retrained as freelance XXX so she could have more flexibility to work outside husband's hours (14) - worked in nurseries overseas and got qualifications in childcare (16) - did secretarial courses to add to CV (18) - used initiative to do language course when overseas (18)
	Family support	- husband encourages her to complete education as left school early (5)
	Specific occupation	- always done type of occupation and tried to stick with that area (1) - able to find work overseas as luckily teaching always available (6) - always opportunities to do supply as a teacher (10) - realised she loved teaching and had experience to take with her (12) - more supportive work environment/occupation in freelancing (14) - might have been easier for her given the occupation she was looking for (15) - got job in education in military schools, able to find in other postings, has found niche (17)
	Own business	- started her own business and was able to travel with this due to advances in technology (3) - ran own business in childcare (16)
Employers & work environment	Employment rights	- changes to what employer can ask you have made it easier to find work compared to previously (11) - know your rights better as you get older, more confident (11) - knew what employers were legally able to ask her about work and family (12)
	Supportive employers	- work wanted to change hours but agreed to accommodate her at shorter hours until they moved on new posting (1) - employer supportive when couldn't change hours (1) - boss is understanding about childcare and timing issues when husband is away, has briefed them (4) - employers were flexible with hours although job advertised as FT (11)

		- supportive employer who understood childcare needs , would make up time lost with work, payment in kind (16) - had good track record with previous employer (19)
	Employer attitudes to SPs	- most places had SPs working there so used to the fact that they may move (1) - worked in Army school so they were used to people coming and going (15) - good employers see that SPs bring quality to their work (16)
	Military support	- worked through Foreign office, something they did for SPs (3) - Army hasn't helped in any way (9)
	Social connections	- working lets her meet people (2) - job during depressive episode got her out of the house and meeting people (3) - met people through work, a social thing for her, got her out of the house as well as earning money (7) - nice to be able to talk to adults (8) - doesn't think she could stay home on her own much longer (9) - work was a nice way to get out and meet people outside of Army life (15) - childcare kept her in work and social structures of community though didn't earn much (16) - not working cuts down chances of meeting people (16) - wife of when in new areas, if get job lose this (17) - had social life through work, strain on relationship with husband improved when got job (19)
Childcare	Husband's support with childcare	- if she is late husband able to help out with childcare when he was around as hours fit in with his work (4) - husband still away a lot, would need to look for childcare if wanted a 9-5 job (8) - husband settled in job so she could rely on his hours for childcare, not going away (15)
	Formal childcare support	- always found good childcare, paid privately and not linked to Services at all (2) - had childcare and an au pair (3) - nursery was free as it was the only one there, no choice (4) - care on camp takes children to school (4)

		- had an au pair who did housework and took care of son, common to have overseas (4) - wouldn't have been able to work without domestic worker, lucky to find her (6) - paying for childcare worth it to her (7) - used nurseries and childminders, some who were SPs, win-win (12) - better nurseries in UK (12) - being a childminder meant she could bring up own children and help other service families (16) - excellent childcare at one base when husband away frequently (16) - nursery available on base, not military (17) - after school clubs look after children (18) - childcare available through school as work hours vary, hasn't had trouble with this (19)
	Informal childcare support (friends & family)	- had other SPs who would pick up children and mind them (7) - family would come if childminder couldn't look after children (7) - mother came to look after children when doing night work when husband deployed (7) - parents are close by so can help with childcare if needed (8) - moved out of SFA to work back home as had someone to help with childcare so she could work (11) - friends helped with childcare, develop good networks in absence of family, rely on friends a lot (12) - parents nearby and help out with childcare, especially when sick (18)
	Work-family balance	- never worked difficult hours, priority to make sure these were regular hours to manage childcare (3) - work hours overseas fitted in with nursery hours for son (4) - worked PT so hours fitted around child hours (7) - does hours that fit around school hours and means no childcare costs (8) - found PT job which fits around childcare (9) - PT post fitted around children, didn't take up a lot of time, didn't have to compromise family needs (10) - worked around school hours (12) - had low-key jobs that didn't pay well but fitted in with children (12)

		- took jobs that were convenient with family (15) - got job down the road from base close to childcare (16) - strict about work fitting in around family (16) - good balance between work responsibilities and commitments at home, not interested in more responsibility (18)
Disclosure	Disclosure	- explained she was military in interview and employer were happy to hire her (1) - able to, fortunate to be able to, negotiate flexibility around hours with employers, was honest (11) - told employer upfront about childcare needs, not just military issue (18)
	Non-disclosure	- knew she would move but knew didn't tell potential employers that she was an Army wife as didn't want to be discriminated against (12) - did sometimes say they were settled when they weren't, bit of a lie (12) - took jobs knowing she would move but figured other people move as well (12) - didn't tell people she was military in case this put people off because they would think you are going to move although people do move regularly (18)

Table 39: S/P experiences of barriers to employment and education during accompanied postings

Categories	Dimensions	Elements
None	No challenges or barriers	- no barriers in UK that were Army-specific (17) - no other barriers (19)
Employers & work environm-ent	Employer attitudes to SPs	- doesn't feel has been discriminated against because of it but has sensed employer would assume she would move soon after getting job (2) - employers anxious to employ Service wives (2) - has to convince employers a bit that she won't be moving and that her family is locally based (2) - difficult to find work when mentioned she was S/P (3) - effect on SPs as employers know you are going to move (5) - worried employers would find out she was Forces from CV and think she would move so wouldn't give her the job (12), CV looks patchy as moving a lot, lots of little jobs (12), conscious of looking nomadic (12) - people don't see you as a career prospect, think you will move with partner (14) - people don't take you seriously as a SP, you are there to fill a position until your husband moves (14) - moves reflected in CV or list of places you have lived, employers know you aren't going to be around for long, goes against you as a S/P (8) - employers see moves in CV, you become expensive to employ compared to someone newly qualified who won't move (9) - employer didn't understand she would have to move because of service (16) - difficult to get a transfer as felt employers were anti-Forces (16) - potential employer not wanting to hire her because she was Forces (16) - feels didn't get one job because employer did a risk assessment and she was a no-no because she was S/P (17) - SPs a risk, employers won't invest in you if you are going to move soon (17)
	Employer attitudes to women	- difficult to find work when mentioned she had small children (3) - glass ceiling in area she worked in (14) - old boy's network that is patronising to women (14)

		- younger so didn't challenge work environment (14) - difficult to get a transfer within civil service as felt employer was anti-women (16) - potential employer not wanting to hire her because she was a woman (16)
	Colleagues	- thought boss was rubbish (3) - female colleagues difficult to work with, bullied and left job (3) - some nice, some not so nice colleagues, just have to deal with it (14)
	Job satisfaction	- job satisfaction affected by under-resourcing of work between areas with effect on services (2) - had to leave jobs that were perfect for her (6)
	Military as employer	- change to tax policy for SPs meant she had to stop working (13) - told by Welfare Officer that if Army SPs were hired, something had gone wrong in the recruitment process, that they shouldn't get the job (17) - no advice from Army or civil service on moving to Europe (17) - become a dependent overseas (17)
Childcare	Husband's availability	- husband helps and his work sometimes lets him go early to help but still "tricky" (1) - limited in the work she can look for as husband deploys and is away a lot so has to fit around the children (5) - can't rely on husband to help with childcare due to his shifts, he needs to check schedule (6) - getting FT job would be difficult as need to sort childcare and husband away a lot (8) - jobs had to fit around school hours as like a single parent - couldn't rely on husband due to lack of pattern to his shifts and being away a lot (8) - husband's deployment makes you like a single parent, jobs can't take up too much time as need to be there for children (10) - sole carer of children, can't rely on husband, affects hours you can work and ability to train (11) - did induction at one job but husband deployed and she wouldn't have been able to manage childcare along with flexible 24/7 shifts (13) - had to take a job she didn't really want to manage childcare, it fitted in with husband's hours and when he was at home (15) - could only work when husband at home to look after children (15)

		- held the fort with children while husband away, single parent family (16) - had very PT job as husband was away a lot, couldn't and can't rely on husband for childcare, can't do evening work as husband might not be there (17)
	Childcare hours	- crèche hours are limited (6) - crèche hours do not align with working hours (6) - never worked FT to accommodate children and childcare hours (7) - childcare hours limited to usual working hours, confines what you can do (11) - no night-time childcare available (13) - childcare only open standard hours, doesn't cater for anything in evenings or weekends (14) - work needs to be within childcare hours, restricted, not open evenings (17)
	Friends and family	- no family nearby to assist with childcare, not able to help out (1) - not having family to help with childcare can make out of hours work commitments difficult (4) - family not around to help with childcare (6) - can't rely on family for long periods of time (8) - no one, no family, to help out with childcare, a lot to juggle (9) - need to rely on others to help with children, friends, makes childcare harder (11) - didn't have family to help with childcare when overseas (12) - civilian friends not an option for childcare, all working FT (12) - family not nearby to help with childcare, lack of informal childcare from friends or family when child is sick (14) - no parents to help out with childcare when overseas (18) - has good network of friends but doesn't like asking for favours (12) - found it difficult to ask others to look after her children, especially if she didn't know them well (13) - can ask sister or friends to look after children if needed but doesn't like to rely on others as everyone has issues (17)
	Availability of childcare	- overseas childcare options limited compared to the UK (6) - difficult for childminders to get licences, no safeguarding or background checks (6)

		- childcare needs a lot of planning if there is something to do, she normally makes the compromise (6) - childcare situation with other S/P not ideal (7) - childcare not great in local area (8) - has to consider school holidays and care of other children (8) - childcare full on one posting, had waiting list (9) - didn't have access to military childcare when doing degree as at home (11) - restricted in choices as couldn't go back to UK with children in boarding school, would lose fees (12) - childcare a restricting factor when looking or work or working (14) - may miss meetings if can't find childcare (17)
	Cost of childcare	- worked for voluntary organisation, didn't get paid much and had to organise childcare (3) - could get a fulltime job but would need to be high paying to afford childcare for 3 children (8) - has to weigh up cost of childcare against her wage to see if it would be financially worth going back to work fulltime (8) - childcare is very expensive and not flexible with hours, has prevented her from work she might have wanted to do (11) - couldn't afford to work FT and pay for childcare (11) - childcare costs outweighed wages (13) - made decision not to send children to childcare as probably would not have been making much at work, would be all spent on childcare (16)
	SP attitudes to childcare	- didn't think length of time child was in childcare was conducive to their development, not comfortable putting him in care (2) - not comfortable putting children in childcare when they were very small (9) - didn't want to pay someone else to look after her child (13)
Work-family conflict	Balance between work and children	- jobs have to fit around childcare, work around it (1) - difficult when children are sick or have training for work (1) - child in childcare very early so she could commute, longer than she wanted so that she could work, something she needed to do (2) - would have like to do less hours so she could spend more time with child but too senior to do so (2)

		- jobs had to fit around children (8) - doing job overqualified for as it fits in with children (10) - can't apply for jobs you want as they have to fit around children (11) - children young when posted overseas, restricted opportunities for work (11) - pulled in two directions if want or need to do more hours but childcare not available (14) - jobs need to fit around children or be flexible if child sick (18)
	Living as a family	- got posted and husband wasn't able to commute back, no other option but to leave job during maternity as wouldn't be living as a family (6) - husband offered extension on contract, will be moving soon (16)
Geography	Posting location	- limited opportunities in area they were based, would have pushed to move back to urban centre if not military (2) - difficult to find job opportunities in isolated area (4) - isolated areas made looking for work difficult (8) - depends on where you are based, easy to find work if closer to a big city as more opportunities (9) - would have liked husband to be posted in certain area so she could finish degree but not able to (11) - had to give up being charity trustee as couldn't get back for meetings (19)
	Transport	- has had to commute long distances (2) - could only look for work within a commutable distance (2) - didn't drive so job would have had to be in an area she could reach (4)
Job market	Job opportunities	- people tend to stay in job until they retire (2) - have to wait for opportunity to come up, had to wait a few years (2) - impossible to find work (3) - people stayed in job until retirement, quite static (4) - might have to take job with low pay in isolated area just to ensure she had a job (4) - finding work overseas limited (6) - not easy to get jobs, limited opportunities (7) - took jobs because it was better than nothing or they were the only ones available (7)

		- jobs don't come up that often as people don't move, unless go on maternity (9) - overseas postings restrictive as not many jobs on camp (11) - difficulty finding job opportunities overseas, limited to certain occupations, restricted (12) - took a while to find work when posted overseas due to limited jobs on overseas camp (15) - no opportunities outside camp for work (15) - minimal employment opportunities overseas (16) - finding PT work difficult but would have kept her hand in (18) - limited job opportunities when overseas, work on base only and not many job available (18)
	Job hunt	- thought employer had someone internal lined up for one job (1) - military community can be catty, can't be bothered with this, looks in local community (5) - employers sometimes already have someone else in mind for job (16) - not aware of other job finding services (17) - no feedback from online applications, feels put forward for jobs by agency to make up numbers (18)
	Uncertainty in finding work	- can get desperate to work and think should you just take anything (1) - never know what job is coming up or what you will get (6)
	Competition from other SPs	- feels querying pay may cause employer to offer job to someone else, job market is competitive in military communities (4) - took a while to find work when posted overseas due to competition from other SPs (15) - SPs of other nations favoured over UK SPs when overseas (16)
	Time to find work	- has taken a long time to find work in every posting and then has to move again (5) - accepts there is a period of unemployment after each move (16) - took a while to find work but fits in with family (17)
Accompanied	Frequent moves	- moved every time she tried to get a job (3) - had to start again everywhere you went (3) - timing of move can affect ability to find work as teacher (6)

postings		- moving every couple of years affects work as have to find new job (7) - planned to undergo further training but went overseas (7) - moves made having a career or getting any job difficult (9) - difficult to work and maintain networks when moving frequently (9) - when she was ready to go back to work they moved again (9) - had to leave job when moved (10) - regular moves affect employment (11) - left one job to join husband in SFA, on maternity so couldn't work, had planned to go back to job (11) - realised would have to move after marriage as he wouldn't always be able to commute (19)
	Sudden & short or delayed postings	- had to leave one job due to sudden posting (3) - only in one area for 6 months so no point looking for work (8) - got unexpected posting when on maternity leave so didn't go back to old job (9) - left job when he joined but didn't move straight away (10) - difficult coming back to UK, not sure when would move overseas again (12) - short posting meant she couldn't look for work, not fair on employer or on children and putting them in care for a short time (17) - short postings of 1-2 years mean you will be moving again soon, not worth looking (18) - short posting so had to take job at a low level as couldn't take management job if leaving soon (19)
	Settling in	- had to wait 6 months to settle in before she felt she could look for work (3) - takes time to settle in and by the time you do you might be moving soon (18)
Skills & experience	Skills & experience	- people didn't understand her experiences as an officer or her as a female officer (3) - no references provided by Army when she left, nothing tangible for employers (3) - couldn't speak local language (7) - more restrictive finding work when accompanied, hard to find work especially if you don't already have a career (11) - couldn't speak local language so didn't look outside camp (15) - moves made getting experience she could take with her impossible (15)

		- employers more interested in qualifications than experience (15) - had to do tests to find work through GLSU despite experiences from previous highly-skilled job (17) - had qualifications but no recent experience to get interviews or work as out of workforce for a long time (18)
	Gaps in employment history	- delays in finding work due to gaps in employment (5) - was out of workforce for a period of time, no longer current (9) - overqualified for some jobs she was happy to do but no recent experience for jobs she was qualified for (18)
	Education & training	- not aware of training on camp being available to spouses (3) - thought about training but felt too old to start new career (3) - wanted to do MA for 6 years, but didn't want to do distance learning, held her back career wise (6) - couldn't get qualifications as would move by the time she got to that stage, employers want you to be there for a year before investing in you (15) - employers knew she would be moving back to UK soon so didn't want to invest their money in training her (15) - would have like to go back to college but not feasible, expensive (18) - moved home to do degree, didn't complete as missed husband's support, didn't feel particularly supported by family during degree (11) - a jack of all trades but not real qualifications to take with her (15)
Disclosure	Informing employers	- didn't want to lie to prospective employers (8) - hard to hide that you are Forces wife when you use barracks as your address (16)
	Concealment	- no challenges from being Army SP, doesn't think it matters, though doesn't mention it (18) - would need to lie to employers about how long she would be in area during short postings (18)

Table 40: S/P experiences of family finances during accompanied postings

Categories	Dimensions	Elements
No effect	No effect from moves or single income	- no real money worries (1) - luckily had no money worries from moves or her being out of work (3) - not financially worse off from moves (8) - no financial problems because of moves (9) - no other financial concerns (10) - no problems from moves or relying on one income (13) - no problems with finances, did ok (14) - no money worries from looking for work or moves (15) - won't have other financial concerns from upcoming move (16) - no money problems when delay to finding work (17) - no financial worries from her not working, not at husband's rank (18) - no problems to date (19)
Allowances & benefits	Sufficient allowances	- relocation allowance covers what is needed, no effect from moves (1) - relocation allowance covers most of costs (8) - relocation allowance is quite generous, covers costs (9) - had extra allowances overseas, had good time socially (12) - get big lump of money for moves, never been out of pocket because of them (15) - relocation allowance helps with cost of moves (18)
	Insufficient allowances	- relocation allowance doesn't sometimes cover the cost of moves outside the UK, ok within UK (5) - allowance for children changed when returned from overseas, reduction in finances, had to get rid of things from overseas (5) - relocation allowance doesn't cover the costs of moving back to UK from overseas (7) - move back from overseas expensive, had to buy a lot of extra items as couldn't bring items with them, starting again (7) - shouldn't spend extra money but as a family often end up doing so, gets eaten up (11)

	Access to benefits	- not entitled to job seekers allowance as husband works, couldn't claim, unfair (5) - tried to keep up national insurance payment by going to unemployment office, couldn't take any jobs offered because they were moving soon (6) - improvements made to applying for job seekers that have helped with pension contributions for spouses (16)
Cost of living	Lifestyle	- still able to afford luxuries like holidays (3) - have 3 children and used to a certain way of life (16) - trouble affording luxuries like holidays (18)
	School fees	- Army pays for most of school fees but still need to find remainder as well as extras (1) - assistance from military but still have to pay a considerable amount, expenses of school holidays and wanting to do things with children (16)
	Cost of living	- certain items, housing, cheaper overseas, didn't need as much money (12) - in the UK everything is a little more expensive so spouses have to work (12) - when moved into SFA had 2 incomes so able to afford rent and other costs as reduced (14)
	Moves back to UK	- took quite a hit moving back to UK, pay cuts and currency changes, hand to mouth for first year, using what they were earning, not saving, no extras for holidays (4) - had a lot of additional expenses moving back from overseas, struggled (5) - worked long hours to make enough money when came back to UK (7), everything more expensive in UK compared to overseas (7), took night work when came back from overseas as needed the money (7)
	Mortgage	- financial strain when had no tenants in own house and paying rent on SFA (6)
Resolving financial problems	Dealing with problems	- been lucky and borrowed from parents when they have needed to (1) - had to take advance of pay to cover these costs (5) - managed problems without getting into debt (7) - difficult organising bank accounts overseas, only he can do this, not sure it will work (10)
	Financial	- try to put money aside so have some while looking for work (1)

	planning	- always been a saver, careful with money (3) - had her military pension (3) - knew about move beforehand so not concerned, did a lot of saving to replace items, saved her income and lived off husband's (4) - priority was sending children to boarding school, didn't buy a house, money for children's schooling, holidays was sacrosanct, never used it for other reasons (16)
	Adaptation to financial situation	- get used to certain income each month, have to adjust to new income (1) - may need to adjust mortgage now as she will not work for a period after they move, may not contribute financially (4) - changed lives to fit financial situation when she wasn't working (9), live within means, not fallen into debt (9), make do, tighten belts when they need to, live sensibly (9) - sorted problems quickly, readjust and find way around it (11) - made cutbacks to adjust if rent increases (14) - managed by cutting cloth accordingly, didn't buy new things, cut back on meals (16), periods of unemployment when moved mean they have to tighten belts a bit (16)
Family income	Sufficient income	- finances not a reason for working (2) - lucky husband makes a decent wage (9), managed on one wage when she wasn't working (9) - his income enough to live on (10), his job continues, know where you are financially with this (10) - easier overseas as had allowances, couldn't tell self can't work so wont, have a good time (12) - they had money so she could afford not to work as spending less on housing (15) - guaranteed money when in the Army (15) - upcoming move will have financial benefits for husband's pensions although will have to manage money as she will not be working (16) - fortunate that money not an issue in finding work (17) - husband's wage good so financially fine (18)
	Reliance on second income	- get used to her monthly income (1) - career taken into account during moves as contributes to income (2) - need income from her job to live comfortably (4)

		- husband relies on her income as well as his own (6) - financially comfortable in Europe, she earned a good wage and had husband's salary (4), always worked a bit so had money coming in each month, even if just a little (14) - didn't make much on some jobs but always bringing something in (16), has had good jobs with good pay, becomes a way of life (16)
	Loss of income	- first job after leaving Service was intern post with no pay (3) - don't always factor in the loss of her income when they move, even with advanced notice (11) - posted when on maternity so lost this income, husband also lost his overseas allowance as moved back to UK, lost a lot of money (11) - with short notice postings only have a few months before move, looking for work after move takes time, doesn't take long for wages to be down a lot and have a negative financial impact (11), can be down a lot of money if you have to give up your job regularly (11)
	Underpaid/ low income	- recent policy changes have impacted her pay grade (4) - was getting basic rate despite skills and experience, could happen now with every move (4) - at top of pay band now but has another 2 years before husband is posted and may take another pay cut (4), impacts on family finances, has consequences for her pension (4) - would have been earning more if hadn't moved with husband and if there had been more stability she could have finished degree (11) - had job where she was making pocket money (16) - employer doesn't pay her much, getting someone at her level for very cheap (18), just wanted a decent wage (18)
	Childcare	- most of income now goes on childcare (17)
	Own money	- didn't have her own money (3) - had to rely on husband for money when not working (6) - always having to give up her income when they move although husband paid FT (6) - worked as she wanted to make her own money, not have to ask if she could spend it, something for herself (15) - worked in jobs she was overqualified for to earn some money (18)

Table 41: S/P experiences of employment and education following transition out of Service

Categories	Dimensions	Elements
Finances	**No problems**	- no problems with money, always been good with money and have good pensions, managed well, not a worry (3) - managed to save enough to buy house without mortgage (3) - husband has job that earns well, fortunate she doesn't have to strive for money, comfortable life (12) - great end result from transition, very well paid job with great benefits (12) - redundancy package fine, no problems, financially ok for them (13)
	Problems, adjusting	- have a mortgage so husband needs to find work, pension isn't enough to cover it and have family to support (7) - doesn't pressure him about work or finances, not destitute, she is working but can't last forever (7) - have to cut back to manage, she could always get a second job, tells him not to worry (7) - used to living on one wage by the time they moved into own house (14) - had more outgoings when in Civvy St, had to reorganise budget, cutback expenses (14) - had to find money for extra rent, not subsidised, have to pay council tax, fuel (14) - prior to leaving husband posted far away, spent a lot on fuel (14) - once they got gratuity that helped them out (14) - has to work now as Civvy St more expensive, has the support to do so (15) - things more expensive in Civvy St, didn't pay for water, council tax, have to pay for these you didn't realise people pay for (15) - has to work now and husband has to do overtime if they want extra things (15)
Employment	**Finding work**	- did try and work for charity to build social networks but left as did not get along with boss (3) - can't go for high-flying job as children at boarding school and wants to be there for them when they come home, doesn't feel she can work fulltime (3) - can't train as feels too old to do so (3) - has to fit work around family responsibilities, has elderly parents to think about too (3) - has set up own business, very early days, wants to find a way (3) - settled before husband, no problem finding work (7)

		- did agency work for a while, not ideal but didn't bother her (7) - been lucky finding work, not an issue for her (7) - doesn't worry as a result, something will come up, has worked all her life (7) - has well paid job with great benefits (12) - knew could get jobs in area, knew places could approach and had started building networks, finding opportunities (14) - not looking at the time as had just had child (14) - even though rural area with fewer opportunities felt could always find work (14) - has more opportunities open to her now she is settled, in one place with support, only had each other in the military (15)
	Effect on career	- career taken off quickly since settled, became management very quickly, has caught up on career (12) - got to where wants career-wise, no ambition to go further, enjoying life, work (12) - husband supportive of her doing something she really wants to, obvious should take job after following him around for years (12) - gone back to work, into a career (15) - is getting qualifications to go with job and prospect of promotion, never been in a job long enough to get promotion or pay rise (15) - new job is permanent, everything else was temporary (15)
	Childcare	- has support from family to help with childcare (15) - even if he is away, it doesn't matter, childcare in place (15)

Table 42: Influences of S/P employment experiences during accompanied postings on well-being

Theme	Sub-theme	Link to categories/dimensions
Identity	<u>Job as Identity</u>	
	- part of the her identity, gives her self-esteem, part of who she is, enjoys it (2) (3.4) - after maternity leave, wanted to get back to work, to who she was and what she knows (2) (3.4) - point of stability, continuity of who she is as a person, a constant, something familiarity in new area where she was new mum with no social network (2) (3.4)	Internal – desire to work (3.4)
	- work gives structure to her life, a constant, hardest move was where she didn't have this (2) (3.4)	Internal – desire to work (3.4)
	- work gives her an identity, lost a bit of herself when she married someone in Service (6) (3.4)	Internal – desire to work (3.4)
	- this job is less stressful than Army job, doesn't take work home with her, gets time to be herself (8) (3.4)	Skills – skills (3.4)
	- job becomes your identity (11) (3.3)	Postings – short/sudden (3.3)
	- didn't think she was underachieving, harmed in any way or not living up to expectations when doing small jobs (7) (3.2)	No effect – maintain career (3.2)
	- not a career woman so doesn't lose sleep over lack of career (19) (3.2)	Career planning - ambition (3.2)
	<u>"Wife of"</u>	
	- difficult to go from being in Army to SATM, loss of status, huge adjustment (3) (3.2)	Work/family – restrictions (3.2)
	- hasn't made a good military wife, wants more for herself, perceived as not being happy with her lot (6) (3.2)	Career planning - ambition (3.2)
	- feel in the shadows compared to husband's career (6) (3.2)	Career disrupt - compete (3.2)
	- comment from MIL made her quite angry, why is his job the most important thing (6) (3.2)	Career disrupt - compete (3.2)
	- period of not working in Europe made her feel bored, frustrated, a bit useless, like a woman on someone's arm (15) (3.3), really a dependent overseas (15) (3.3)	Job market – opportunities (3.3)
	- using experiences of military life to help other SPs a positive experience for her, really helped her (11) (3.4)	Skills – volunteering (3.4)
	- doesn't like to be wife of, job means you are there of your own right, not because of husband (17) (3.4)	Employ – social support (3.4)
	- doesn't feel integrated until she had a job, connects you to place beyond your spouse (17) (3.4)	Employers – social support (3.4)

	Mother identity	
	- found being at home with children difficult, lonely, wasn't natural mother (3) (3.2)	Work/family – restrictions (3.2)
	- being with other women difficult, not used to being with women, difficult to break out (3) (3.2)	Work/family – restrictions (3.2)
	- time when he has been in Service has been when she has had children, a release for her that she hasn't had to think about work because of the moves, glad she hasn't had to worry about work (10) (3.2)	Work/family - prioritisation (3.2)
	- feels doesn't' do as good a job as a mother now she is working, feels guilty about not being there for events with youngest (18) (3.2) - not being the best mum (18) (3.2)	Work/family – choice (3.2)
	- conflict between her needing to work and wanting to spend time with child, had to work certain number of hours (2) (3.3)	Childcare – S/P attitudes (3.3)
	- very difficult to put child into childcare but needed to due to tours, not comfortable, not good for children to be in childcare for so long (2) (3.3)	Childcare – S/P attitudes (3.3)
	- bothered her child was in childcare that wasn't ideal, difficult, wondered if he was happy there (7) (3.3)	Childcare – availability (3.3)
	- leaving Service wasn't difficult decision as didn't want to be away from children (8) (3.2)	Work/family - choice (3.2)
	- fine with job being secondary to husband's as wanted to have children and didn't want to work (10) (3.2)	Work/family - prioritisation (3.2)
	- fine with leaving Army as wanted children, her goal at the time (12) (3.2)	Work/family - choice (3.2)
	- her choice to stay home with children, doesn't regret this (18) (3.2)	Work/family - choice (3.2)
	- happy to be home with children when small (9) (3.3)	Childcare – friends/family (3.3)
Agency	Choice/control	
	- enjoyed job that wasn't in usual area (1) (3.2)	Career disrupt – adapted (3.2)
	- resentful lack of choices because in mode now where she is working for money, just keeping in employment but not enjoying it (6) (3.2)	Career disrupt – progress (3.2)
	- embarrassing to leave job after sudden posting (3) (3.3)	Postings – short/sudden (3.3)
	- unsettling feeling when thinking about move in a few months, already thinking of work (1) (3.3) - moves are exciting but also worrying as have to look for work, stressful though tries not to (1) (3.3)	Job market – uncertainty (3.3)

	- stressful to not be in charge of planning, no control of where you move to, very hard not to have a choice (6) (3.3)	Job market – uncertainty (3.3)
	- focused on when he leaving, thankful he is leaving soon, doesn't think she could stay any longer (6) (3.2)	Career disrupt - paused (3.2)
	- unsettled time when she quit but then he didn't move (10) (3.3)	Postings – short/sudden (3.3)
	- easier when overseas as could justify not working, had allowances and could tell self can't work so just have a good time (12) (3.3)	Job market - opportunities (3.3)
	- knew moves overseas wouldn't be forever, happy to do for a short period, though could have been frustrating (12) (3.3)	Job market - opportunities (3.3)
	- trying to find work causes worry, get used to income, wonder if she will find anything and when she can start (1) (3.7)	Resolving – adaptation (3.7)
	- get anxious when between jobs as have bills to pay (1) (3.7)	Resolving – planning (3.7)
	- not being able to work when move causes financial concerns, may not be able to contribute financially in same way (4) (3.7)	Family income – reliance (3.7)
	- financial struggles on return to UK made them want to be back overseas, more relaxed lifestyle, easier there (5) (3.7)	Cost of living –UK (3.7)
	<u>No effect</u>	
	- happy not to work when overseas as not forever and could find work when she came back to UK, short period of time (12) (3.2)	Career disrupt – paused (3.2)
	- not bothered by not working during short postings, happy to be at home then (18) (3.3)	Postings – short/sudden (3.3)
	- no stress from financial situation (banking) as only husband could sort this out (10) (3.7)	Resolving – dealing (3.7)
	- extra allowances overseas so could enjoy self socially, get a job hopefully back in UK (12) (3.7)	Family income – sufficient (3.7)
	- fine with low-paid short term jobs as they fitted in with family (12) (3.4)	Childcare – work-family (3.4)
	- happy to take agency work as it was convenient to circumstances at the time, though wouldn't want to do it for life (15) (3.4)	Childcare – work-family (3.4)

	- working at a level of responsibility she is happy to do now wouldn't want more because of home commitments (18) (3.4)	Childcare – work-family (3.4)
	- PT suits her fine as husband still away a lot (8) (3.4)	Childcare – husband (3.4)
	<u>Financial independence</u>	
	- didn't like not having own money coming in (3) (3.7)	Income – own money (3.7)
	- strange to have to rely on husband, ask him for money, never had to do it before (6) (3.7)	Income – own money (3.7)
	- likes to make own money, doesn't like to rely on others, doesn't want to have to ask if she could spend it (15) (3.7) - earning money was something for herself (15) (3.7)	Income – own money (3.7)
	- stressful trying to keep up NI payments and wondering if she would get another job, income (6) (3.7)	Income – loss income (3.7)
	<u>Concessions</u>	
	- has stayed in jobs she hasn't been happy in before (2) (3.3)	Employers – job satisfaction (3.3)
	- accepted having to be secondary worker but bitter, cross, no other choice (3) (3.2)	Career disrupt – compete (3.2)
	- feels she has given up a lot although her choice to do so, wishes she could have stayed in Army (3) (3.2)	Work/family - prioritise (3.2)
	- difficult and frustrating to make compromises to her career, sacrifices a lot and doesn't think people understand this, difficult to understand unless you are a S/P (9) (3.2)	Career disrupt – compete (3.2)
	- on good day accepts compromises she has had to make, more difficult on bad day, can get bitter, angry, frustrated hard not to blame partner (9) (3.2)	Career disrupt – compete (3.2)
	- prioritising family over work had an effect on her, more when younger, not fair, wanted a career, had to make hard decisions (11) (3.2)	Work/family – prioritise (3.2)
	- annoyed at compromises she has to make regarding work & childcare (6) (3.3)	Childcare – husband available (3.3)
	- sad to leave one job as it was the right job for her, could see herself there for a long time (6) (3.3)	Employers - job satisfaction (3.3)
	- can be hard to move regularly and then have to give up job (11) (3.3)	Postings – frequent (3.3)
	- disappointed to give up work before she began but her choice so ok (13) (3.3)	Childcare – husband available (3.3)

	- happy to do upcoming move as will be good for her husband, looking at big picture, no brainer and love being overseas (16) (3.3)	Work/family – living as family (3.3)
	- difficult to break out of being SATM, couldn't find way to fulfil potential (3) (3.2)	Work/family – restrictions (3.2)
	- feels unable to work properly or fulfil potential (3) (3.2)	Work/family – restrictions (3.2)
	- frustrating to be intern with no pay after leaving Service (3) (3.2)	Career disrupt – underemploy (3.2)
	- kick in the teeth to be going back to job she could have done years ago (9) (3.2)	Career disrupt – underemploy (3.2)
	- pleased and grateful for job although underemployed, trying very hard to be positive (9) (3.2)	Career disrupt – underemploy (3.2)
	- her expectations higher than she had thought, hard to make them work though (12) (3.2)	Career disrupt – paused (3.2)
	- didn't bother her to be underemployed but bit frustrating to have to do a job you are overqualified for (19) (3.2)	Career disrupt – underemploy (3.2)
	- frustrating that they moved whenever she looked for work (3) (3.3)	Postings – frequent (3.3)
	- frustrated with people she worked with, could have done their jobs (12) (3.3)	Employers – colleagues (3.3)
	- very frustrated that she could only apply for jobs that fitted around available childcare (11) (3.3)	Childcare – hours (3.3)
	- frustrated that husband hasn't been able to support her to achieve her goals (11) (3.3)	Childcare – husband available (3.3)
	- frustrated had to stop degree as didn't have the support to finish, don't think there has been any harm but very frustrated at the time (11) (3.3)	Skills – education (3.3)
	- frustrated at lack of flexibility in Army to support her to achieve something for herself in posting husband to certain area to finish degree (11) (3.3)	Skills – education (3.3)
	- frustrated by how treated in civil service, disheartening for anyone wanting a career there (14) (3.3)	Employers – attitudes women (3.3)
	- became more frustrating as she couldn't advance in career due to lack of qualifications (15) (3.3)	Skills – education (3.3)
	- guilty and awkward spending money on courses when she wasn't earning even though they had the money (18) (3.7)	Skills - education (3.7)
Connected-ness	<u>Connected</u>	
	- difficult to feel settled during short postings as was moving soon and not working (17) (3.3)	Postings - short, sudden (3.3)
	- benefits her mental health, lets her meet people, share experiences with others (2) (3.4)	Employers – social support (3.4)
	- got job during depressive episode that got her out of house, meeting people, worked for while though not ideal	Employers – social support (3.4)

	job (3) (3.4) - worked for voluntary organisation, fun, enjoyed it (3) (3.4) - work a way to have adult relationships, would go insane otherwise (8) (3.4) - any job at the moment would be good for her mental health, staying at home for much longer would be difficult (9) (3.4) - loved volunteering overseas, met nice people (12) (3.4) <u>Isolation</u> - would be very unhappy in current posting if wasn't working and had no children, not on camp (1) (3.4) - would have been very fed up, isolated if hadn't been working (7) (3.4)	 Skills – volunteering (3.4) Employers – social support (3.4) Employers – social support (3.4) Skills – volunteering (3.4) Posting - location (3.4) Employers – social support (3.4)
Self-worth	<u>Purpose</u> - desperate to work during lonely posting, found job eventually but found herself in trough of depression, couldn't see where life was going (3) (3.2) - can get quite down about it, moody, if it takes time to find work, likes to contribute (5) (3.3) - work has been her saviour, would have gone mad without it, gives her a purpose (6) (3.4) - a huge, important part of her Army life that she always worked (7) (3.4) - not bothered doing jobs she was overqualified for, bit frustrating but rather be doing a lower pay or grade job, meeting people, than not working (17) (3.2) - some jobs weren't ideal but weren't forever, didn't bother her, more important to be working (7) (3.4) - didn't mind doing jobs that weren't brilliant or were boring, were good fun, didn't affect her in any way, sometimes you just have to do them (7) (3.4) - happy to work in job she was overqualified for to earn money (18) (3.7) <u>Value</u> - hard to take being on basic wage given experience and skills (4) (3.7) - employed on the cheap, a big deal for	 Work/family – restrictions (3.2) Job market – time to find work (3.3) Internal – desire to work (3.4) Internal – desire to work (3.4) Career disrupt – underemploy (3.2) Internal – desire to work (3.4) Internal – desire to work (3.4) Income – own money (3.7) Income – underpaid (3.7)

	her, could always happen from now on (4) (3.7) - feels negatively about pay as took on extra responsibility to get back to pay band grade and may lose this again in move, blames government (4) (3.7) -pretty appalling to not be valued based on experience (4) (3.7) - move back to UK made both quite low, felt devalued in job, financially difficult time, difficult to adapt due in part to financial worries (4) (3.7) - demoralising to hear Army doesn't want to hire SPs, important for them to work (17) (3.3) - demeaning to become dependent after moving overseas, lose your status (17) (3.3) <u>Self-esteem, self-confidence</u> - miss things that make you feel good about yourself (11) (3.3) - lack of work can affect self-esteem, get knocked quickly (11) (3.3) - daunted being out of work for so long, lacked confidence (18) (3.3) - felt she didn't have a brain despite qualifications (18) (3.3) - felt a bit helpless being stuck between two different types of jobs when looking, knew was capable but lacked confidence (18) (3.3) - demoralising to not hear back from jobs she has applied for online (18) (3.3) - work gave her self-esteem and something to do when children at school (18) (3.4) <u>Self-improvement, personal growth</u> - work gives you clarity (5) (3.2) - happier now she is older, has done things she wouldn't have, worked in areas she wouldn't have, grown as person (11) (3.2) - enjoyed the jobs she had (15) (3.2) - moves can help you focus on work, make you stronger as you work out how to get around barriers (11) (3.4) - moving means you try new things and learn about yourself (11) (3.4) - moves have made her a stronger, more independent person (11) (3.4)	Employers – attitudes to SPs (3.3) Job market – opportunities (3.3) Skills – skills (3.3) Job market – job hunt (3.3) Childcare - work-family (3.4) No effect – found work (3.2) Career disrupt – adapted (3.2) Career disrupt - adapted (3.2) Internal – personality (3.4)

4.2 Qualitative results - S/P experiences of the military institution and the influences on well-being

Table 43: S/P experiences of the military institution

Categories	Dimensions	Elements
Encounters with the military		
Accompan-ied postings (5.5)	Negative experiences	- moves mildly negative experience, more of an inconvenience, tried to minimise family disruption (2) - lots to sort out when you move, only a few days to sort when in UK but longer when overseas (5) - takes 6 months to get used to area, a year to live it, and 6 months to get used to leaving (9) - had sudden change to posting on husband's return from tour, had to reapply for housing in short space of time (10) - told by Army would be posted to one area and that family important to military but when given paperwork this had changed, had to leave sons with father, common occurrence (17)
	Positive experiences	- been lucky with moves (1) - overseas postings did a lot of different activities she wouldn't have done otherwise (1) - moves were frantic but enjoyed challenge, used to it as from military family (3) - moved a lot as child, used to it, liked new experiences, new places, people (4) - had great opportunities as result of military life, had excellent life, lucky to have had a good time (7) - moves were positive (8) - moves fairly positive, lived in lovely places and met lovely people (9) - moves positive, got to live in different places, meet people (11) - moves positive (13) - moves positive, overall brilliant (12) - learning experiences, positive (14) - moves positive (16) - moves have been positive, fortunate with postings and accommodation (18) - moves positive, used to moving (19)

	Mixed experiences	- moves positive and negative (6) - took offer of posting overseas as lesser of 2 evils (6) - grateful for experiences provided by military but not for her in the long haul (6) - moves better than anticipated, each different depending on circumstances (10)
	Adaptation	- moving doesn't get easier over time, stressful life event anyway (1) - got used to moves over the years, adjusts faster, though thinks here we go again (11) - focuses on what needs to be done, finds out information, likes to be prepared (11) - get used to moves, no problems as a couple (13) - last few postings was more "oh again" (13) - had more notice for some than others (14) - moves easy in beginning without children, then got more chaotic (14) - moves without children positive, those without negative (15) - used to military life, married previously to member of Services (17)
Expected roles within the community (5.1)	Expectations based on husband's rank	- if husband of senior rank, you are expected to support other SPs, no one checking you are ok, seniority has an impact (2) - more responsibilities as CO's wife during tour as may be casualties, would be figurehead during this, expectation that you would support officer's wives (2) - support officer's wives who wouldn't access usual services, informal network of support (2) - degree of responsibility of role (2) - should be visible as CO's wife during tours, be present during events, connect with welfare (2) - are a figurehead in community (2) - still obligated to entertain, host dinner parties, although allowance discontinued (2) - expected to attend family days (2) - some roles she did because she wanted to, others were traditionally the roles of wife of though wouldn't have performed roles if in the UK (9) - had a lot to do on behalf of husband when he was CO, meeting new wives, organising events (12) - has outgrown this now but did for a year until she got bored and want to challenge herself (12) - used to run coffee mornings and organised events for SPs during deployment (15) - other SPs look to you because of your experiences and who your husband is (15)

		- Army felt officers wives should be leading other wives (18) - husband explained that she might have more influence as an officers S/P (18) - had young children at the time and had welfare to help organise events (18) - organised events she wasn't interested in but did it with other SPs, had support from SPs (18) - organising events was good as it forced them to mix with people they wouldn't have (18) *Minor* - no responsibilities with families but had to attend evening events when husband CO (3) - only attended a few events as token wife of (14)
	Voluntary roles	- had role in AFF, big community to buy into though, provided organisational support as opposed to Army (3) - was more involved in military community in Europe, running groups and regiment as wasn't able to work so did this instead (9) - did small pieces of voluntary work in community in UK, didn't stop her working, (9) - volunteers at the moment but does around working hours (9) - easier to do in Europe as rely on community a lot more because you are overseas, something to do (9) - more activities to be involved in overseas then in UK (9) - involvement in the community has varied according to her choice and whether or not she is working (9) - no options for work overseas so volunteered for group welcoming new families to area (12) - would like to volunteer if she could get someone to look after children, can't juggle it all with husband who isn't there (17) - helped organise parties for children on base when overseas (17) - took part in certain groups like wives club for regiment overseas (18) -used to help run toddler group when children young (19)
	No roles	- no responsibilities (1) - never had roles, not expected to do anything because of who husband was (3) - no responsibilities in the community (5) - no roles in the community that affected hours of work (6) - no roles in the community that conflicted with work (6) - no roles within community (10) - no roles, not really involved in community (11) - no roles in community (17)

		- no pressure on her to perform any roles, not good at them anyway (14) - not in regiment or on base so no responsibilities within community (18) - no roles specific to husband's rank (19)
	Changing expectations from military community	- clichéd ideas gone but still expected to at least know other officer's wives (2) - was expectation but times are changing, no longer expected to do lots of different roles, some wives work and this is fine with community (9) - no longer frowned upon if SPs not as involved in the community as they have been in the past (9)
Encounters with military institution (5.5)	Engaging with the military	- couldn't open bank account without husband (6) - would ask for husband, not talk to you as a person (6) - when discussing housing issue with housing officer S/P was very upset, told by officer that they don't deal with crying wives and only spoke to husband (6) - first move more difficult as she isn't part of process, he has to fill in all forms (10) - local service for families closed without consultation or warning as military wanted to use space (19) - military realised they had made a poor decision but don't think they have to behave like civilian organisation (19) - military need to realise they are dealing with SPs who expect civilian standards (19) - discussion of this closure on local press lead to husbands being reprimanded by commander and jobs being threatened (19) - no repercussions to husband's career from reprimand but talked about in exit interview which made her think there might have been despite her being an independent entity, told him to be mindful (19) - threatened with eviction following complaint about street party, very nasty, was resolved after 6 months by meeting with housing officer but only uniformed personnel allowed to attend, SPs excluded (19) - threatened with eviction because the military employs people who don't know what they are doing, think they can issue orders that will be followed but SPs aren't military (19) - still attends events at mess but wouldn't seek support from RAF as doesn't expect to receive any (19) - photographs of children being emailed around rather than picked up as safe-guarding issue, can't go to police like in civilian situation (19) - held resident's meeting about issues but SPs not invited, told there should never have been a problem (19) - told by husband she is unlucky, two incidents in last 10 years of military life (19) - told after incidents that officer's not setting good example for other ranks (19) - officers and SPs should set an example for other

		ranks, SPs should be meek (19) - SPs these days aren't going to be meek, officers aren't going to marry meek women, will be educated and don't expect to be dismissed (19)
	Military community	- no mess or camp at the moment because of husband's job, no community (1) - regular socials held for couples above sergeant rank, not a lot of events for those below this rank, despite being majority of camp (4) - social life not as good in the UK compared with overseas (5) - back in previous posting but no community here (5) - more events held overseas, more thing to do, nothing to do in messes back in UK (5) - tends not to go out other than to work, shopping or take daughter to school as nothing on in community, nothing in messes (5) - have summer and Xmas balls but no opportunities to meet people (5) - brought own house near patch when got married, didn't live on camp (6) - lots of social activities overseas, can be too much for some people (6) - very close-knit community, live and work in community, nothing private (6) - no sense of community in current location (9) - doesn't live on barracks at the moment, not enough houses large enough for her family (17) - in a regiment there are functions and events to go to (18) - been times that she couldn't avoid being S/P (2) - always tried to not be completely military (10)
Categories	**Dimensions**	**Elements**
Perceptions of military support		
Support during military service	Provision of support, information	- husband given leave when she had PND and bought home, very good with compassionate support (6) - support from Army in terms of removals and information on schools good, felt supported (7) - provided flights home when in Europe to see family (7) - didn't get charged rent on housing as it was so poor (7) - good support for moves, good welfare package provided, information packs about new area, school and services (8) - good support when had family bereavement, husband given leave (8) - chaplains came to see her after bereavement although also social friends, didn't want help from chaplains, had husband and family (12) - Services allowed them to put children through good school (12)

		- good support from Army when needed it, couldn't fault support (13) - support given during family bereavement, husband bought home from deployment although this isn't what she was expecting (13) - welfare has bigger budget overseas as SPs away from families and need more support (17) - support from Army varies depending on where you are and by regiment and according to individual welfare staff (17) - supportive of welfare if they are supportive of SPs (17)
	Lack of support, information	- military support for families poor, not sure what they should provide (3) - Army doesn't support Army SPs at all, say they need you to support personnel, then give you horrible houses and move you around (3) - lots of support and contacting of SPs when husbands' deployed but not during non-operational times (4) - difficulty with neighbour in one posting, welfare suggested she move on her own with 2 children and while husband deployed (5) - everyday support is not really there (6) - welfare unit currently 45 minutes away from location, promised services in current location when first posted but have yet to materialise (9) - knows from experience there is information they could be given easily (10) - have to ask other SPs/families for information about overseas postings (10) - no network provided when unaccompanied, a lot of support when you are accompanied (11) - harder for welfare to keep in contact and support you when unaccompanied (11) - not well looked after when moved to N America, culture shock (12) - serving person has to ask for information (16) - went and sought information before move from HIVE or website (16) - military have made a big effort to improve support and information for families, better than ever before (16) - knowledge of seeking information out comes from experience (16)- in current location support is poor though other Services provide good support and have had good support in the past (17) - welfare assume coffee mornings are working because they are being held, might need to keep an eye on them to make sure they are working correctly and not leaving some SPs feeling excluded (17) - military may not realise the level of support that needs to be there for SPs (17) - doesn't think much of support from RAF (19) - get varied quality in community workers as person before was excellent (19) - current

		community worker is ex-RAF, doesn't like SPs, not the right person for the job and has no qualifications in community work, major problems with them (19) - support workers employed who have little real world experience despite this being where military families live (19) - had no contact with community support worker in the year she had lived in location prior to issue with closure of service arising (19)
	Accessing military support	- aware of services but never used them (2) - officer SPs wouldn't seek support from military services, wouldn't feel ok admitting to problems, division in ranks in accessing services (2) - reluctance to access services due to pride, discomfort, services not right for their needs, mostly emotional (2) - has support from colleagues, friends, contacting services would feel alien to her unless something very serious had happened to husband (2) - wouldn't access services for day-to-day problems (2) - depends on problem but would still seek support from welfare if had to (5) - not sure who you can talk to about problems or where to go for help, SPs don't know where you would go, who you could talk to, not sure where to find information (6) - doesn't use support from Army as had other means of support, easy to find out about local neighbourhood (10) - support available from military if you want it, need it, she hasn't need it (15) - have to go and ask for help (16) - on some bases you have to be more self-reliant, especially if a long way from big cities (16) - doesn't like going to husband's employer for support (19) - wouldn't seek help from RAF based on her experiences (19)
Support during transition	**Support for wives**	- no support from military, leaving just like another move (3) - clear leaving Service nothing to do with her, husband did all farewells, dinners, wives not thanked in any way (3) - all information went to husband, she got nothing (3) - no support for wives offered though not sure what you would offer (3) - weren't told anything really, nothing in post to thank you for being military spouse after so many years (12) - she never got help from military, thinks husband did though didn't receive much (12) - move out was phased, didn't receive help but didn't need or expect it (12) - didn't receive any advice, would have to ask husband (14)

	Support for husband	- husband leaving soon, resettlement only discussed in relation to personnel (6) - husband got support for job resettlement, help with CV, job fairs, courses (7) - leaving different for her than husband, works in civilian world, she is not in military (7)
	Phased leaving	- hasn't left yet but will be soon, has bought house and settled in area (8) - let out of Army gradually , she went first, occasionally asked to events but not interested, drawn out process, gradually faded out of life (12) - semi-civilian by the time they left, had own house, didn't go from quarter with Army job into civilian house with civilian job (12) - hadn't been much of Army wife for years by the time he left, settled when realised wouldn't be going back overseas (12) - when he left Service, they weren't on patch, completely away from Army community, lost touch with it (13) - didn't have anything to do with Army as S/P anymore (13) - living out of quarters at that time, everything would have gone through him (14) - wasn't looking for help as mentally she had already left, settled in civilian community (14) - made separation from Army life years before he left, nothing they could do to help (14) - would have needed support if moved straight from patch to Civvy St but already established in (14) - didn't have much of any effect except he was not away as often (14)
	Housing	- found quarter in current location so they could at least house hunt in area (3) - went from being military family in Europe, one of best postings, straight back in Civvy St (3) - spoilt in last posting, had housekeeper, now has to deal with household duties (3) - first time ever owning an house that hasn't been subject to military moves (3) - never wanted own house, happy to be in quarters, never had responsibility, if something went wrong, someone would fix it for you (3) - house uses up a lot of her time, always something to do next, constant thing she has never had to deal with (3) - expected to take care of things, husband doesn't think about the time it takes (3) - would happily pass onto someone else if she could (3) - owning own home has meant making more decisions, always something that needs fixing, in quarters could just call someone up and they would come and fix it, don't have that anymore (13)

		- normally get a short period to decide where to move to, goes quickly (13) - husband's parents knew area they moved into, could have gone anywhere but choose here as knew area and made sense to settle there (13)
	Process of leaving	- great end result from transition (12) - husband planned leaving, worked well, managed to get her job and him leaving at the right time lined up, lucky everything dovetailed together (12) - husband had everything in place to leave, knew what wanted from resettlement (13)

Table 44: Influences of S/P experiences of the military institution on well-being

Theme	Sub-themes	Link to categories/dimensions
Identity	<u>Assuming rank</u>	
	- lowest point during maternity leave was when she had responsibilities of CO's wife, had to maintain outside image of being available to everyone else (2) (5.1)	Roles – husband's rank (5.1)
	- doesn't like to be known for what her husband does (9) (5.1)	Roles – husband's rank (5.1)
	- did enjoy supporting husband, did for a year until she got bored and want to challenge herself (12) (5.1) - looking back now is filled with horror at doing roles supporting husband now as has outgrown these activities (12) (5.1) - no pressure to perform these roles, her choice (12) (5.1)	Roles – husband's rank (5.1)
	- fell into these roles, felt had to because of husband's rank, expected to do as NCO's wife by other SPs (15) (5.1)	Roles – husband's rank (5.1)
	- performed roles but under pressure, "encouraged" to take them on (18) (5.1)	Roles – husband's rank (5.1)
	- felt it wasn't appropriate to be leading other wives in this day and age simply because of who their husband was, not right she might have more influence than other SPs (18) (5.1) - wondered if it was appropriate that she should be organising events because of husband's rank (18) (5.1) - did it because it was expected even though they knew the soldier's wives might think they were "lording it" over them (18) (5.1)	Roles – husband's rank (5.1)
	- needed role at time as husband deployed, needed to be busy and have support, couldn't think about him being away (15) (5.1)	Roles – husband's rank (5.1)
	- roles were good distraction while he was training (18) (5.1)	Roles – husband's rank (5.1)
	<u>"Wife of"</u>	
	- not as connected to military community this posting, nice to be yourself, not referred to as wife of, can be own person (1) (5.1)	Roles – husband's rank (5.1)
	- doesn't see herself as an Army SP, married to someone in Service but tries to live a civilian life, minimises role as Army wife (2) (5.5)	Encounters – community (5.5)
	- not supported by military, just there because of husband (3) (5.5)	Military support – lack (5.5)

	- permeating attitude that you aren't your own person, you are wife of, dependent, derogatory term to her (6) (5.5)	Encounters – experience (5.5)
	- really hard when people asked for husband and didn't speak to her as a person (6) (5.5) - feels resentful towards RAF for attitude towards SPs and what they should be doing as a military spouse (6) (5.5)- breath-taking, shocked that housing officer would talk to her in that way (6) (5.5) - made her realise the structure of military (6) (5.5)	Encounters – experience (5.5)
	- always tried not to be completely military, doesn't see herself as military in any way, she is civilian, husband is military (10) (5.5)	Encounters – community (5.5)
	- not expecting to be told off, not military (19) (5.5)	Encounters – experience (5.5)
	- really difficult to be expected to let husband talk for you in public meeting, very angry that she wasn't allowed a voice, not on (19) (5.5)	Encounters – experience (5.5)
	- feels constrained in behaviour and actions following incidents in community because people in military who think that S/P should behave appropriately, stay in line, or affect his career (19) (5.5) - will keep out of trouble because that's what she feels she has to do (19) (5.5) - keeps head down now, does what she enjoys (19) (5.5)	Encounters – experience (5.5)
	- feels really angry that she has to change her behaviour, gave up a lot already and now supposed to give up freedom of speech (19) (5.5)	Encounters – experience (5.5)
Self-worth	<u>Self-esteem/confidence</u> - mixed feelings about expected roles (9) (5.1) - felt daunted by role as hadn't done anything like it before, scared by role and by involvement of person before her (9) (5.1) - doesn't like to be in the spotlight (9) (5.1) - took role and was herself, did what she could and realised she couldn't please everyone (9) (5.1)	Roles – voluntary (5.1)
Agency	<u>Choice, control over life, autonomy</u> - get settled in area then moved on again (1) (5.5) - overall moves have been stressful process (5) (5.5) - being in own house after marriage was positive, had own life and own choices, first few years of being married to someone in military quite good (6) (5.5)	Postings – adaptation (5.5) Postings – negative (5.5) Encounters – community (5.5)

	- feels resentful towards RAF for lack of opportunities for work (6) (5.5) - focused on when he leaving, thankful he is leaving soon, doesn't think she could stood it any longer (6) (5.5)	Encounters – perception (5.5)
	- has had great time, good experiences and opportunities but will be pleased when husband leaves as will have a bit more control of their own lives (6)	Postings – mixed (5.5)
	- lucky she has been ok overseas if not sorted in your own circumstances could be quite miserable, feel a bit trapped overseas (6) (5.5)	Encounters – community (5.5)
	- stressful not knowing housing allocation (8) (5.5)	Postings – positive (5.5)
	- first 6 months after moves has same conversation with husband about how she dislikes moves, concerned she won't make friends (9) (5.5)- mood gets better gradually after moves because you have to adapt to the good things and have to make it work because it's your life and don't have a choice (9) (5.5)	Postings – negative (5.5)
	- stress and tension from having to reapply for new SFA after sudden change to posting (10) (5.5)	Postings – negative (5.5)
	- frustrating lack of information given on overseas posting about simple everyday things like banking, would be helpful to have rather than having to go find things out (10) (5.5)	Military – lack (5.5)
	- finds it difficult to move, doesn't like change (10) (5.5)	Postings – mixed (5.5)
	- moves harder, more challenging when you are younger, adjust when get older (11) (5.5)	Encounters – experience (5.5)
	- set expectations for one posting and disappointing for whole family to get posting somewhere else (17) (5.5)	Postings – negative (5.5)
	- Army says "happy wife, happy solider" but not like that, families come way down list of priorities (17) (5.5) - cynical now about what the Army will say and what it will deliver (17) (5.5) - at point now where she doesn't trust anything unless it is in writing (17) (5.5)	Postings – negative (5.5)
	- military can make decision you don't like and you just have to suck it up (19) (5.5) - not entitled to make decisions that affect her home and children but she is expected to accept these (19) (5.5) - wouldn't normally tolerate these events but has to put up with it, doesn't trust military (19) (5.5) - military gets away with stuff and you just have to shut up about it, frustrating, never admit they are wrong, like banging head against brick wall (19) (5.5)	Encounters – experience (5.5)
	- mistrust of military began following closure of facility (19) (5.5) - affected how she feels about military, feels	Encounters – experience (5.5)

	frustrated with them, spied on (19) (5.5) - incident re eviction was very protracted, nasty, 6 months of living hell (19) (5.5) - doesn't trust RAF, wouldn't touch them with a bargepole after events, nasty experience (19) (5.5) <u>Concessions</u> - a lot of compromises in military life, don't get choice of where going to live, housing (9) (5.5) - compromises harder to cope with as you get older and after a long time in the military system (9) (5.5) - no way of communicating with Army about how SPs feel about compromises of military life, how shit it is (9) (5.5) - start of new posting a trigger point for her, painful reminder of compromises she has had to make, things she had to let go of, say goodbye to, nursing children through moves (9) (5.5)	 Encounters – perception (5.5) Encounters – perception (5.5) Postings – negative (5.5)
Connect-edness	<u>Connected, part of family, cohesion</u> - enjoyed being in AFF, big community to buy into though (3) (5.1) - became obvious that if you did good things it could be fun and benefit community/regiment (9) (5.1) - was "part of that community" and she and family benefited from her activities (9) (5.1) - enjoyed supporting husband, happy to do it (12) (5.1) - sociable person and can see value in helping families overseas, loved being overseas but understands some junior wives found it hard being away from home (12) (5.1) - happy to create regimental family overseas, in her nature to be a team player (12) (5.1) - Army did everything to help, never felt on her own or having to fend for herself (13) (5.5) - nice being part of strong, old-fashioned community (19) (5.5) - likes mess life (19) (5.5) <u>Isolation, disconnection</u> - hard posting at the moment, no mess, not a big military family (1) (5.5) - angry that military wouldn't do anything to help with moving house (5) (5.5) - no link to military community in current location, doesn't feel part of it at all (9) (5.5) - worst of both worlds, not military, not civilian (9) (5.5) - no support or encouragement to be part of community (9) (5.5)	 Roles - voluntary (5.1) Roles – voluntary (5.1) Roles – rank (5.1) Military support – provision (5.5) Postings – positive (5.5) Encounters – community (5.5) Military support – lack (5.5) Encounters – community (5.5)

	- when unaccompanied, you're on your own, no support from Army (11) (5.5) - feels isolated from regiment when not living on base, not part of activities on camp during deployments (11) (5.5)	Military support – lack (5.5)
	- not supported on one occasion while S/P with similar problem was, left floundering (17) (5.5)	Military support – lack (5.5)
	- doesn't live on barracks at the moment, not enough houses large enough for her family, instantly makes her feel slightly alienated from community (17) (5.5)	Encounters – community (5.5)
	<u>Public vs private</u>	
	- concern that support provided by military may not stay private as in small communities, things get back to people (6) (5.5)	Encounters - community (5.5)
	- doesn't trust institution's confidentiality or them as institution, wouldn't seek help from them for anything based on experiences (19) (5.5)	Encounters – experience (5.5)
No problems, positive influence	<u>No problems</u>	
	- moves didn't bother her, always a bit of a challenge, didn't mind them (4) (5.5)	Postings – positive (5.5)
	- just deal with short notice postings (14) (5.5)	Postings – positive (5.5)
	- happy to go where Army sends them (17) (5.5)	Postings – positive (5.5)
	<u>Enjoyment, excitement</u>	
	- happy time overseas, more like a holiday (1) (5.5)	Postings – positive (5.5)
	- excited by postings, enjoyed it, boring moving in but exciting going to new places (3) (5.5)	Postings – positive (5.5)
	- posting overseas challenging but great, better than starting over again with move in UK (6) (5.5)	Postings – positive (5.5)
	- thankful for great life, don't blame military for anything (7) (5.5)	Postings – positive (5.5)
	- enjoyed travelling around (11) (5.5)	Postings – positive (5.5)
	- adventurous person so loved opportunity to live in other places (12) (5.5)	Postings – positive (5.5)
	- liked the challenge and being busy (12) (5.5)	Postings – positive (5.5)
	- enjoyed where they have been posted, good to have variety (18) (5.5)	Postings – positive (5.5)
	- loved one posting, going back there soon (19) (5.5)	Postings – positive (5.5)

	- had great time, good life (19) (5.5)	Postings – positive (5.5)

4.3 Qualitative results - S/P experiences of family relations during accompanied postings and the influences on well-being

Table 45: S/P experiences of the effect of accompanied postings on their relationship with their husband

Categories	Dimensions	Elements
No problems	**No problems**	- generally moves went ok, no major fallouts (3) - close as a couple so moves don't affect them, hasn't changed relationship, talk about any issues (4) - no effects of moves on relationship (5) - no impact of moves (8) - no problems with relationship (14) - no effect on relationship from moves (16) - no stress on relationship from moves or reintegration (18) - no effect or problems from moves (19)
Benefit to relationship	**United**	- relationship strong, get along as friends as well as being married (2), moves can show cracks in relationship or make you see strengths, make you rely on each other, been good thing for them (2) - learnt that they approach things differently, each move they learn how to support each other better so doesn't cause as much tension (10), he is learning to recognise that the emotions of the moves are different for her and the children (10) - missed family at times but found it better to be traveling with husband (11) - moving can be a crunch point for relationships but they enjoyed the challenge (12) - born into military family, eyes wide open (16) - postings always joint decision between her and husband, planned together (16) - coped with moves as a team, do things together (18) - husband has consulted her about moves and whether as a family they will do them, can ask for certain jobs, more choice (19), important to him that she is happy (19) - didn't consult with her at the start of marriage but does now as there are children to consider, would kill him if he didn't (19)
Relationship	**Relationship**	- moves can cause relationship problems although they are a strong couple (1), - moving doesn't get easier though they have done

problems	**strain, tension**	it a lot of times, both have worries (1) - issues with job division during moves, although husband is good at helping (3), could be tension if both tired or issue with housing (3) - husband didn't understand issues she was having with perceived lack of potential in career, "typical military, him" attitude towards it (3) - moving and not knowing what house will be like causes arguments (6) - moves introduce tension into relationship as she needs time to settle in (9), times when his career not going well or in area they don't like which can be tough (9) - bit of tension around expectations of marching out (10), usual arguments during moves but nothing major (10) - bit of tension during move to Europe with timings, she didn't want to go, difficult time for them (10) - felt resentful towards husband for taking her away from friends (15) - strain on relationship in first posting until she started working, gave up a lot (19)
	Blame	- pay issue, not to do with him, just the situation they are in (4) - blames husband if she can't find work, his fault (5) - have to work on relationship to stop blame (9) - he finds it difficult when she finds it difficult to leave somewhere, hard not to blame himself (10) - frustrated with husband that he was the reason she couldn't be more stable and do degree (11) - hard to live with in posting where children had to stay behind in previous location, not constant but did bring it up (17) - resolved itself when they moved after 6 months and were reunited (17)
	Unaccompanied postings	- family will be split for period during upcoming move (1) - not ideal as support each other during busy week (1) - going unaccompanied put strain on relationship as only home weekends (7) - he was living as a single man, she was at home supporting family (7) - discussed being unaccompanied for her career but decided it wouldn't be good for marriage (9)

Table 46: S/P experiences of the effect of accompanied postings on children

Categories	Dimensions	Elements
No problems	**No problems**	- no effect on child (4), child has coped well, not fazed, fairly resilient (4) - children not affected, current posting is only place children remember (6) - children excited by moves, don't question them, used to them and resilient (9) - no real challenges with children, not due to moves, usual teenage behaviour (13) - children young when moving, adaptable at that age, hasn't affected them, don't remember living anywhere else (14) - no effect on children as mostly moved in the same area so had the same friends and didn't have to change schools (15) - child coped well with other moves (19)
Effect on children	**Personality**	- moves have made children more adventurous, rounded and grounded (12) - moves have been good for children, they are sociable and confident but may also be their personalities (18) - children have good education, are confident and independent compared to other children (18) - children will become more adaptable in the long run (19)
	Age of children	- moves harder once you have school age children, quite fun when on own and married, just looking after yourselves (9) - moving not so problematic when children younger, didn't mind it as much (18)
	Relationship with children	- child fighting with them both at the moment, resents father for moves (5) - close relationship with child as they were all each other had during moves (7) - time home from boarding school is special, quality time, though not the same as having them home (9) - has exceptional relationship with children partly due to their independence and being used to being at school and coming home when they needed to (12) - no nagging children over homework, their responsibility (12) - may have clashed if they were at home as she has a strong character (12) - teenage behaviour may have been worse if they weren't posted overseas, more sheltered there (13)
	Disclosure	- told children about move early, may have been a mistake as upset (19) - difficult to decide when to tell children they are moving, thought they should have told them earlier (10)
Stability	**Maintaining**	- try to keep home life stable during postings, one of them always around, protective of him (4)

	continuity	- next posting will be during GCSE year, will try and stay in area (5) - kept children settled, got extension to keep them settled (6) - don't want a mobile lifestyle for children, want more for them (6) - won't move to be closer to family as not fair on children to move again, promised they wouldn't move again (7) - delayed move as felt children needed time with father after deployment and also closure with school and family Xmas (10) - once had children didn't want to be in military lifestyle due to effect of moving on children (15) - moves with children were negative, those without positive (15) - chose to put child in non-forces school so they would have more stability among their friends, won't be transient like older child's friends (17) - being settled will provided familiarity for child, won't have to leave friends (17) - had to leave oldest children with their father for short posting as they were in a good school (17) - children didn't like separation, missed their family and younger siblings (17) - she was always home for children, a constant source, which benefited them, made them level-headed (18) - won't stay in area just because they like school, wouldn't settle there (19) - not sure they will move again if this move doesn't go well for children, want them to be settled and happy (19) - not sure how other child will deal with move as straight after deployment, didn't cope well with last deployment (19) - realise your life affects children when you see them upset, need to protect them (19)
	Opting to board	- boarding school provided continuity for child, can be settled and not have upheaval, same friends for a long time and not having to move during exams (1) - chose to keep him in state school and cope with the moves, not a big issue for them (2) - sent children to boarding school very young like other Army families (3) - knows boarding school is the right decision for them, gives them continuity (9) - oldest children now boarding to protect them from difficulties of making friends after moves (9)- eldest went to boarding school early as due posting before he was to go to secondary school, protected him from moves (9) - children struggled with moving schools, hard to find places for them at one school, so boarded early (12) - boarding not her choice but made it work (12)

		- boarding school worked well for them though they were almost forced into making the choice (12) - children's education and happy childhood the best thing about being in the Army (12) - decided on boarding school when children were teenagers to provide them with stability, lesser of two evils (18)- haven't moved much but always the potential for disruption (18) - had to weigh up pros and cons of boarding, long-term it is worth it, will be good for them (18)
	Unaccompanied vs. accompanied	- chose not to move with husband to protect child from moving during exams (1) - child's struggle to adapt and fact other child might have same problems meant she left posting (7) - moved home as other child had more difficulty with making friends and didn't cope as well (11) - children's education the reason they moved home, one child approaching exams, wanted stability (11) - have lived accompanied and unaccompanied depending on what is best for family at the time (11) - have to consider effect of moves on children, not just how you feel, would rather be travelling with husband but other things to think about (11) - will be settled until both children finish GCSEs, will deal with A levels when this comes up but may go unaccompanied (17)
Social networks	**Maintaining family relationships**	- hard for child to leave grandparents when she moved (1) - hard time when child away from home during family bereavements, need counselling due to worries about other family deaths (1) - trouble arranging access to step-child (6) - haven't seen family as often as they would have liked (6) - difficult for children to understand why they can't see grandparents as often as they would like (8) - children happier, content, when closer to grandparents and can see them more often (8) - children have stronger bond with set of grandparents who travelled to visit them in different postings than other (11) - child close to cousin who maintained a close relationship with during moves (11) - youngest closer to grandparents as spent more time with them, oldest more reserved (14) - had to grow relationship between oldest and grandparents (14) - didn't see much of grandparents when overseas but nearby at the moment so can see them more often (18) - children not close to cousins, downside of not being close to siblings (18) - children saw less of their cousins (19)
	Leaving friends	- moves affect children's relationships with other children they have grown up with (1)

		- child resilient but finds it difficult to leave friends behind (2) - aware of friends moving on, sad about this, but largely protected from moves (6) - moves difficult on children, leaving friends or having friends leave them (8) - children get used to moves but doesn't get easier, main problem for them is leaving friends (8) - beginning to get to stage where they weren't enjoying the moves and leaving friends, reassured this is the last move and that they will be settled (8) - want to settled before exams so child would have friends they could take into high school (8) - leaving friends is hard for children (9) - social aspects of moves harder on children (9) - children found leaving hard, will get harder as they get older and are more attached to friends and activities (10) - one child has coped, other has struggled, misses friends and father, hasn't settled as well as other child (17) - when child has problems, it reminds him of how happy he was in previous posting (17) - not ideal to be moving teenagers are they are more conscious of their friends (18) - child seen lots of his friends leave which he doesn't like (19) - child upset that they will have to move next year, will have to leave friends (19)
	Making friends	- moves an unknown for children, will they like school, make friends (1) - frequent changes of schools made child more withdrawn, didn't know how to socialise properly, relied on sister to do so (3) - child labelled as posh by other children, not included in social events (3) - tried to include him more in events but didn't work (3) - child finds moves hard, always has, difficulty making friends and fitting in (5) - hasn't moved with other children she knows, though some families from previous postings in current location (5) - child finds it difficult that doesn't have friends from younger years due to moves, hard to keep in touch with people (7) - got bullied as the new student (7) - children good at making friends because they have moved so often and have had to (8) - harder for children to make friends as not at same school as other children on patch, changes dynamics (9) - harder for eldest to meet local children as boards, no playmates during holidays (9) - eldest had one move where afterwards he was very upset about his lack of friends (9) - effect of postings more about children as they get older, unsettles them (13) - adjusting to schools and friends get harder as

		children get older, more flexible when they are younger (13) - will be more traumatic as they get older and start school and making friends (14) - put child in childcare in one posting although not working so he could make friends before pre-school started (19)
Schooling	**Accessing school places**	- need address before you can confirm school places, sometimes not sure exactly when you are moving (8) - education has been impacted as you don't get a choice of school despite Covenant, doesn't work in the real world (9) - usually posted after deadline for schools, seen as late and so have to wait for places (9) - want children to go to good school not the one with places left or failing school (9) - had to arrange places for 3 children coming back from overseas, told they would need to go to 3 separate schools (9) - found school but not the same as the one other children on patch go to (9) - couldn't visit schools in UK when overseas (9) - finding schools becoming an issue, need to be considered in decision about where to rent (10) - hard to find school places when posted after school deadlines (12) - more difficult to find schools places as children got older (18) - in competition with other families to get good school, children need to be educated well as they will be moved in two years, no point going to a bad school (18) - has been through appeals process, didn't find military families got priority (18)
	Adaptation to boarding school	- child anxious about move to boarding school and moving house, a lot of worries for someone his age (1) - boarding school more like home for first child, settled there, moves don't affect them, no worries about making friends (1) - boarding school didn't work for one child, didn't like being away from home (11) - boarding school hard for first 3 weeks and then children loved it until they left (12)- no issues with them being sent to boarding school (12) - child reluctant to board at the start but loves it now (18)
	Academic ability	- child has coped academically (2) - child has problems keeping up with school work, falls back and has to get back to level (5) - move back to UK was hard on child, huge change for them, didn't work well (7)- trouble adapting to school environment and curriculum, different from overseas (7) - child fell behind at school, not academically strong but labelled as naughty rather than behind (7)- school overseas was great but only there for 2 years (7)

		- effects of moves depend on child (11), sometimes a positive to move schools, can be better than previous, sometimes a negative (11) - teachers want child assessed for additional need at one school but when moved to new school, teachers found nothing wrong with his ability (11)- learn more about your child's strengths and weakness due to moves, more easily able to talk to schools about their needs and work out what is best for them (11)- differences in curriculums and assessment of her skills has been an issue (11)- told child was behind when moved to UK but was being asked to do work she had already done, no consistency in education (11) - both children do well in school, helps them see positives (17) - had to explain child's ability to new school, they wanted him reassessed despite evidence of ability, concerned about wasting time as would move again soon (18)

Table 47: S/P experiences of the effect of accompanied postings on their wider family

Categories	Dimensions	Elements
Support	**Distance from family**	- never been out of home town other than for a holiday, never away from family (1) - not the same talking on the phone (1) - lucky Europe not too far away (1) - lucky in Europe that they were close to home so could come back and visit (7) - sister lived nearby in Europe so was able to see her regularly (7) - posted close to family on one posting, they could visit easily (7) - bought house on a whim when overseas, panicked about not having someone to live in UK, location is far from family, wouldn't choose there now (7) - lucky that they haven't moved further away than Europe (18)
	Support (emotional, practical)	- relies on family for emotional support (1) - family provided support for her during post-birth move with PND (2) - parents supportive when she had children though couldn't always be there (3) - would have helped to have family around when both her and child were poorly to help out but was overseas (4) - no family in area during PND, husband came back from training but only for a short period (6) - no friends or family to help you move, move on own with military moves (6) - family very supportive (11) - on isolated posting received unhelpful comments from mother in law (3) - family didn't understand what she was going through when moved home (11)
	Anticipation of future roles	- wants to be there more for parents as they get older (1) - parents are elderly and while not caring for them, they are a loose responsibility, no support from sibling (3) - conscious that parents are getting older and might need to be looked after, not sure how they would manage if posted away (18) - something sitting on your shoulder for the future (18)
	Family events	- harder when people are unwell or things happen and you want to get back but can't (1) - when grandparent ill was unsure of

		when she should go and see him before he died, would go up and he would be fine, wished she lived at home at times of family illness (1) - mother couldn't come and look after her during medical recovery as had caring roles at home during difficult year overseas (4) - distance a factor when someone is ill (8) - difficult when someone is ill, need to work out when is the best time to see them (8) - not able to go sort out family illnesses (12) - overseas when father died, just had baby, not in position to have practical support from family (12) - lucky has small family, lived nearby when parent died which made relationship easier (17) - missed funerals because they were far away and difficult to get away if husband deployed and children in school or upset by absence of father (19)
Family relationships	**No problems**	- parents used to moves as military themselves, normal for them, would come visit as soon as possible (3) - moved a lot as a child so not unusual to be apart, hasn't changed relationship although they don't see each other as often (4) - no effect on relationships with family as not close to family (5) - close to sister and niece (5) - husband from military family so used to not being near family (13) - parents passed away when young, not an issue for her (13) - still close to family, hasn't changed relationship (19)
	Positive effect on relationships	- close to family although doesn't see them often as she would like, a positive thing for them (7) - has made her closer to her parents, don't take them for granted (1) - looks forward to visits from parents, quality, precious time with them (1)
	Negative effect on relationships	- relationships suffer as not as close to family, reduced contact, out of sight, out of mind (6) - people get caught up in own lives so don't see them, time passes, no one's fault (6) - would like to see family more, mother coming to visit, been months since she saw her as she helps sister (7) - more difficult with husband's family when children younger, expectation that her children would be the same as their cousins and would have the same relationship with their grandparents (9) - become family narrative that child doesn't like grandparent though not true, just a different child (9) - moved away after they got married so took longer for family to get to know husband, not local so not visiting as often (14) - parents missed out relationship with child when younger (14) - children closer to grandparents now out, benefits of living near

		family outweigh those of being in military (14) - siblings not as close as they would have been because they don't see them that often, make more effort with grandparents, downside (18) - haven't seen some family members as much (19) - away from family so didn't see much of them, didn't see one side at all (19)
	Maintaining relationships	- have to balance own family against wider family, when to visit (1) - close to family and see them as often as they can, keep in contact regularly (4) - end up making more effort to see people when went home, used to be more frantic, now more relaxed (6) - difficult to maintain relationship when longer drive for parents to visit (8) - see more of parents when posted nearby, though still see when further away (8) - see less of husband's parents as they are further away (8) - close to mother so see her more often (9) - work hard at maintaining relationships with family and grandparents as they are important, end up travelling all over to do so (9) - husband's parents less willing to travel to see them so they have to make the effort, inevitable part of lifestyle (9) - need to maintain relationships with grandparents for children, sometimes easier than other times (9) - makes effort to see friends and family on regular annual visit back to UK (10) - fortunate that parents and sibling made effort to come see her, supportive (11) - close to sister, family missed them a lot and made huge effort to come and visit them (11) - makes effort to get together with family at least one a year (12) - close to family but makes the effort to have a relationship (12) - talk to parents often on the phone but not the same as being there with them (14) - able to maintain contact with family through technology (16) - siblings don't have partners so able to travel to visit frequently (17) - managed to maintain relationships between children and grandparents (18) - parents able to visit Europe but harder for them to travel as they get older (18) - make an effort to go and visit the rest of the family than they do though more used to travel (19)

Table 48: S/P experiences of the effect of transition on their relationship with their husband and wider family relations

Categories	Dimensions	Elements
Effect on family	**Effect on family**	- time as a family short, didn't have much time, over in a flash (13) - no major issues for children, both settled now (13) - decision to leave felt like the right decision (13)
	Wider family	- live nearer family now (13) - easier to have parents nearby to help with childcare, can have nights out together, makes huge difference (14)
Effect on relationship	**Husband's adjustment**	- husband coped well with transition, has good job, gets on with it, partly military training, partly personality (3) - doesn't have same concerns regarding children, easier for him (3) - doesn't think husband's mental health is great, not sure if from time in Forces, enjoyed that (7) - had job after leaving Service but got made redundant (7) - back working for TA but not sure for how long (7) - thinks he will find it hard going back to Civvy St, won't be happy, difficult when they have served for a long time (7) - he will miss comradery of military life, differences with Civvy St bother him (7) - difficult to find a job these days, tries to be supportive, not pressure him (7) - took while for husband to find work, take first thing offered, so grateful to have something, doesn't always work out straight away (13) - husband found his feet now, getting there, took 2 years (13) - husband worried about transition but loves it now, no problems (15)
	Effect on relationship	- bought house and husband commuted for 18 months (13) - when deployed, you know what it will be like, just get on with it, do own thing, unaccompanied had husband who was away all week but home weekends, different (13) - always thought she was self-sufficient, being unaccompanied and having to make decisions hard, trying to work together but apart (13) - relationship grown and adapted over time, work well as a team, been together a long time (14) - had money problems that made them closer as a couple (14) - easier having him home so you can talk, read expressions, nice to have him home rather than away all the time (14) - moved back home as didn't want child to start school and then be moved (15)

Table 49: Influences of S/P experiences of family relations during accompanied postings on well-being

Theme	Sub-theme	Link to categories/dimensions
No problems	- ok leaving other family members as not close to them, more stressful leaving friends than family (5)	Family – no problems (5.2)
Identity – mother/ parent	<u>Mother – stability in education</u> - hard to send children to boarding school, prided herself on being a good mother (18) (4.2) - have to balance panic against the whole picture (18) (4.2) - feels she missed out on their childhood, both good and bad (18) (4.2) - sometimes panics and wonders if did right thing sending them to boarding school, difficult to know if did right thing (18) (4.2)	Stability – boarding (4.2)
	- felt like a pushy mother insisting that child be in appropriate class for his ability (18) (4.2)	Schooling – academic (4.2)
	- hard as a mum to send children to boarding school, heart-breaking, have to put feelings to one side (1) (4.2) - mixed feelings about sending children to boarding school, have to put them first although it is hard and other people may not see that (1) (4.2)	Stability – boarding (4.2)
	- not easy choice to send children to boarding school, painful, emotional, didn't imagine having to do it (9) (4.2) - finds herself justifying decision to other mothers even though she has mixed feelings about it (9) (4.2)- decision to send to boarding school harder for mothers (9) (4.2)	Stability – boarding (4.2)
	<u>Responsibility, concern for child</u> - hard when child not coping with family bereavements but not the right decision to bring her home from school not matter how much she wanted to (1) (4.2) - really worried about how child would cope with changes at school after difficulties (1) (4.2)	Social – maintaining (4.2)
	- heart-breaking, terrible to see child with no friends (3) (4.2)	Social - making friends (4.2)
	- move back to UK very stressful, a lot going on, child very unhappy at school (7) (4.2) - upset her that child was upset and bothers her that she found it difficult (7) (4.2)	Social - making friends (4.2)
	- sad seeing children leave their friends or have friends leave them (8) (4.2)	Social - leaving friends (4.2)

	- hardest thing, heart-breaking, to hear child upset about not having friends (9) (4.2)	Social - making friends (4.2)
	- affects her that one child hasn't adapted as well and that they focuses on previous postings where they were happier, makes her anxious (17) (4.2) - feels less anxious that they will be settled during the children's exams (17) (4.2)	Social - making friends (4.2)
	- difficult to see children upset at leaving friends, realise your life affects children, need to protect them (19) (4.2)	Social - making friends (4.2)
	- frustrated that child was repeating school work and labelled as behind (11) (4.2)	Schooling – academic (4.2)
	- feels sorry that son missed out on relationship with grandparents (14) (4.2) - feels sorry that parents missed out on having relationship with children when small, have made this up now (14) (5.2)	Social – family (4.2)
	- feel sorry for putting them through moves (19) (4.2)	Social – leaving (4.2)
	Advocacy in accessing school places	
	- stressful waiting for paperwork to come through to confirm school places, main issue, in limbo until sorted (8) (4.2) - can cause sleepless nights (8) (4.2)	School – access (4.2)
	- waiting for school places causes anxiety (9) (4.2) - "hairy" few weeks waiting to find places after return from overseas, difficult thinking about how they would manage with different schools (9) (4.2)	School – access (4.2)
	- nightmare finding school places after deadlines had past (12) (4.2)	School – access (4.2)
	- traumatic, emotional, not ideal to go through appeals process for schools (18) (4.2)	School – access (4.2)
Identity - daughter, sister (*links to connected -ness)	<u>Family member (sister, daughter)</u>	
	- hard when family members are ill and you are away, want to get back but can't (1) (5.2)	Support – family (5.2)
	- hard on her being away from home during difficult year for family, wanted to be at home (4) (5.2)	Support – family (5.2)
	- difficult when someone is ill, need to work out when is the best time to see them (8) (5.2) - want to be there for people but can't be, have to work out when you can visit, stressful (8) (5.2)	Support – family (5.2)
	- very difficult when family ill and not able to go back and help out (12) (5.2)	Support – family (5.2)
	- terrible dilemma that she couldn't go back for parent's funeral as just had baby, difficult time (12) (5.2)	Support – family (5.2)
	- hard not being able to go back for funeral but may not have been able to go if working either (19) (5.2)	Support – family (5.2)

Agency (*links to ID - mother)	<u>Concessions – family life</u> *Schooling* - always regret sending children to boarding school but not sure what else could have been done (3) (4.2) - never liked boarding but did it for children's benefit and to give them stability, hard to send them (12) (4.2) - look back and think they have missed parts of their lives although quite involved (12) (4.2) - a low time for her when her sons were with their father, part of their family, wanted them with her (17) (4.2) - didn't need to see anyone but not her happiest point (17) (4.2) - couldn't enjoy return to familiar area as not a family unit (17) (4.2) *Unaccompanied* - being unaccompanied until child finished exams the best decision for the children, they come first so fine with this (1) (4.2) - not bothered by separation due to move, work around it (3) (4.1) - doesn't like being apart, wants to be travelling with husband but right decision to move home with children to give them stability (11) (4.2) <u>Blame/resentment</u> - doesn't blame husband or feel resentment towards him for pay issue, not to do with him (4) (3.7/4.1) - moves always been positive (16) (4.1) - can be annoying if he has to miss things they have planned, doesn't cause friction as easy-going (8) (4.1) - husband accepts blame regarding finding work, understands, know she doesn't mean it (5) (4.1) - difficult not to blame husband for frustrations over career, not fair but does (9) (4.1) - difficult not to blame husband for frustrations over career, not fair but does (9) - lucky they have a solid relationship, can cope (9) - sometimes just crawl through situations, have to work on relationship to stay above this (9) - blaming husband for	Stability – boarding (4.2) Stability – boarding (4.2) Stability – boarding (4.2) Stability – unaccompanied (4.2) No problems (4.1) Stability – unaccompanied (4.2) Problems – blame (4.1) Benefit – united (4.1) No problems (4.1) Problems – blame (4.1) Problems – blame (4.1)

	impact on career can be painful and damaging for relationship (9) - feels bad that he feels guilty about her having to move, doesn't blame him (10) (4.1) - frustration with husband regarding education didn't cause tension because she didn't let it (11) (4.1) - can be resentful a lot of the time because of his job, not able to do things (15) (4.1) - didn't want to move overseas, could have split up over this (15) - didn't fight about it, instead distance herself from him didn't talk about it (15) (4.1) - sometimes blamed him for fact they had to left children with ex, accused him of separating family, difficult to live with at this time (17) (4.1) - first posting hard, put strain on relationship as made a lot of changes to be with him and she was lonely until she started work (19) (4.1)	 Problems – blame (4.1) Problems – blame (4.1) Problems – time (4.1) Problems – blame (4.1) Problems – blame (4.1) Problems – blame (4.1)
Connecte-dness	<u>Disconnected, at a distance from family networks</u> - miss out on seeing nieces and nephews grow up (1) (5.2) - as they move a lot family think they can cope with moves, be strong (6) (5.2) - get put in compartment by family, out of sight out of mind (6) (5.2) - without regular contact time passes, can become estranged, feel estranged as a military family (6) (5.2) - bothers her that she doesn't see more of her family, relationship not strained but feels she has missed out on relationship with her mother (7) (5.2) - missed out on day-to-day activities with family, wishes could be with them, makes her feel sad that has missed out (7) (5.2) - feels she missed out on a lot during the time they were posted overseas (12) (5.2) - slight regrets it but compensated for by the act they had a great life (12) (5.2) <u>Support, understanding</u> - understand that each have worries, try to reassure one another (1) (4.1) - needs husband to recognise that she is struggling with moves, needs to grieve and talk about practical aspects	 Support – distance (5.2) Family – negative (5.2) Support – distance (5.2) Support – distance (5.2) Family – maintain (5.2) Problems – strain (4.1) Benefit – united (4.1)

	when she is ready to, learn to work together (10) (4.1)	
	- decided to go back travelling with husband as she was exhausted (?managing on her own) (11) (4.1)	Problems – blame (4.1)
	- hated seeing him unhappy, had to stick with it, tough (12) (4.1)	Benefit – united (4.1)
	- not sure who she would rely on if husband away and she got sick, quite worrying (4) (5.2) - miss family at times of crisis because that's who you rely on (4) (5.2)	Support – support (5.2)
	- difficult leaving family members she is close too, ok leaving others as not close to them (5) (5.2)	Family – no problems (5.2)
	- no family in area during PND, no support, quite hard, affected her well-being at the time (6) (5.2)	Support – support (5.2)
	- hard not having mother or sisters around if having a bad day, feeling down (1) (5.2) - going to N America hard, not sure how she would manage, other side of the world, unsettling time (1) (5.2) - glad she went overseas, didn't want to come home (1) (5.2) - talking on the phone to family not the same as being there, hard (1) (5.2) - found it hard being away from family (1) (5.2)	Support – distance (5.2)
	<u>Tension</u>	
	- can be stressful, have a lot to worry about, can cause stress and fights (1) (4.1)	Problems – strain (4.1)
	- didn't help to talk to husband about depression, he didn't know how to handle this, typical military, him attitude to mental health (3) (4.1)	Problems – strain (4.1)
	- moves always stressful, cause fights (6) (4.1)	Problems – strain (4.1)
	- tension around marching out and standards required (10) (4.1)	Problems – strain (4.1)
	- tense time when he came back from tour prior to move, needed to readjust as a couple (10) (4.1)	Problems – reintegration (4.1)
	- could have killed family members for unhelpful comments (3) (5.2) - felt vulnerable as a new mother, could have done with extra support at this time rather than unhelpful comments (3) (5.2)	Support – support (5.2)
	- arguments within family are stressful for her, stressed out (5) (4.2) - sad and upsetting to deal with, not sure what day will bring (5) (4.2)	Effect – relationship (4.2)
	- felt they put more effort into make sure children see grandparents and maintain relationship, feels more difficult for her (9) (5.2) - really difficult to manage narrative that child had difficult relationship with grandparent (9) (5.2)	Family – maintain (5.2) Family – negative (5.2)

	- hard moving home as surrounded by family but they didn't understand what she was going through (11) (5.2)	Support – support (5.2)

4.4 Qualitative results - S/P experiences of social networks during accompanied postings and the influences on well-being

Table 50: S/P experiences of social networks with other S/Ps during accompanied postings

Categories	Dimensions	Elements
Social networks	**Personality**	- wouldn't introduce self, knock on doors, not like that (1) - quite self-sufficient and not used to have female friends , found good friends to talk to (3) - fairly extroverted and confident person so doesn't have trouble in making friends (6) - good at making friends and social support, getting to know people and suss out who she would like to spend time with (12) - takes a while to meet people as keeps herself to herself (5) - not good at mixing with other SPs (7) - not one to go chat to neighbours (7) - some people made for Army life, confident, love it, others you wouldn't even know where they lived because you never see them (7) - quite shy and reserved but would introduce herself despite this because of the fact that you are moved constantly (13) - not the best at trusting people, quick to pick up flaws, can tell if she doesn't trust someone or if they will get along well (16) - has taken initiative in postings, finding out about area, learning language but not all SPs are like that (18)
	Meeting people	*Positive* - has made friends each posting (1) - found it easy to make new friends on postings, "a bit shallow", always found friends and social life wherever she was (3) - never had issues making friends, found it easy possibly because she was ex-Army so knew people or had children and met people that way, found likeminded people (3) - parents at boarding school very welcoming, all military (9) - has lovely friends from time in military, lots of welcoming and warm neighbours, not bitchy or catty, didn't exclude people (14) - make effort to get to know people because you won't be there for long (14) - working in bar helped her meet people, put head above parapet, met lots of different people, social role as well as working (16) - pick friends up along the way (17)

		- found it easy to find like-minded people to make friends with, makes friends with people who are like her, like attracts like (18) - become friends with people, chat to them, that's half of it, just talking (18) - not interested in being in "in crowd" (18) - has more friends really as make friends when you move (19) *Negative* - hard at first to meet people on new postings as likes to work people out before making friends with them, though is chatty person (1) - didn't find friends until children were about 6 or 7 (3) - difficult to meet people because she works but that's her choice (4) - met some lovely people but also horrible people (5) - difficult to meet people when you are moving around, meet a couple of nice people in each area (5) - children went to different school from children on patch on return from Europe, harder for her to make friends as wasn't at the school gate with other SPs or walking to school with them (9) - people are welcoming in military community but keep you at distance, friendly on one hand but not on another, experience moving a lot (10) - on one posting lots of wives worked on one posting, not around, especially if they had been there a while (12) - negative part of moves is leaving people behind (14) - happy living where she is but not living on base makes forming bonds with SPs harder, not seeing them at school, shops, physically further away (17)
	Time of life	- when children younger, conversation centred on them, wider topics that were more interesting not able discussed, not interesting (3) - a lot of support when son was a toddler as could go to playgroups and meet other women there (4) - natural, easy to meet other mothers through playgroups (4) - more opportunities to meet people if you have small children, not easy to meet people now children are older, events based around young children (5) - had older child at the time of first posting but thought you would be more accepted with smaller children as there is more to do for them (5)

		- met people through children and their friends but didn't go out socially much (7) - neighbour at different stage of life, younger children (7) - military neighbours at different points in their life, don't have anything in common (9) - make friendships around nurseries, playgroups and school gate when children younger (9) - when children older, don't have anything to do once you have dropped them off at school, go to coffee mornings (9) - feels that patch has group of mothers with young children who have deep friendships (10) - met people at school gate, play area when had children, did childcare swaps, playdates (12) - met SPs in playgroups (14) - at different stage in life to other SPs so not going out a lot, doesn't have small children which cuts down on meeting people (16) - easier to meet people when have children, didn't think there was a way to be involved in community unless you had children, depends where you are but not a lot for people without children to do (19) - tried to include childless couples because knows what it is like (19) - relationship with husband improved immeasurably once she had a child (social outlet released pressure) (19)
	Maintaining friendships	- make an effort to stay in touch with close military friends, godparents to each other's children (1) - has good friends from different postings that she keeps in contact with and makes effort to see (3) - knows will have great friendship while posted but will leave people behind, make the most of it (16) - keeps in contact with other SPs through social media but don't see them often because of logistical difficulties (17) - have lots of military friends they keep up with but don't see often, they are military so know what it is like (18) - would be nice to see more of friends but that's the way it is (18) - some last longer and are picked up again when you end up on same base, Facebook helps maintain friendships you might have lost (19)
	Depth of friendships	- only met a handful of other SPs who are "genuine" friends (1) - happy to live near someone and be very friendly and then not stay in touch (2) - not good at having acquaintances so hasn't developed friendships with other SPs when she has moved although is friendly within the community finds it difficult to achieve those types of relationships though other SPs very good at this (2)

		- keep the friends you really like when you move and drop others, bit superficial (3) - a lot are "surface friendships", socialising on the surface, similar to university, you go and meet a few people who remain friends (6) - friendships go deeper than help with children, need networks, talk to lots of different people (9) - if lucky can make one or two real friends on a posting who you would keep in contact with, the rest are acquaintances who you wouldn't be friends with if you weren't military (9) - make lots of acquaintances when moving but only few friends (11) - friendships quite superficial, quite common, only stayed in touch with small number as didn't have much in common with some SPs (12) - no fakeness to friendships, all know what the situation is, have good time (12) - found it easy to make friends on posting, though wouldn't describe them as long-term friendships, just while you were living there, kept in touch with some since leaving (13) - friends she makes are firm (16) - made close friends on postings that she makes an effort to go and see, supportive friends (19)
Military community	**Patch life**	- postings have been enjoyable because of the friends she has made (1) - smaller camps had fewer SPs to choose from in terms of finding similar people (3) - found good support once she realised she didn't need to attend coffee mornings and could find likeminded people, strength of the Army patch life (3) - first posting different than imagined, thought it would be friendlier (5) - first experience of patch life was in inter-Service camp, predominately Army who didn't mix with non-Army SPs, although made some friends (6) - on huge camp at the moment, lots of different parts you don't know about (6) - different in Europe, possibly last ditch effort for people to save marriages, lots of drama and "weird stuff" and back-biting from other SPs, people may think they are on a permanent holiday, act different away from UK, differs by base (6) - people were friendlier in N America because you had to, far from home, couldn't go visit family (7) - making friends potluck, depends on who is posted at the same time as you, people make the posting (9)

		- one posting was in street with military families who worked in different areas, different experience to previous posting which was more military based, haven't really lived in military-setting for a while (10) - first time on patch, wouldn't be people she would rely on if needed (10) - knew S/P next door was probably similar to you, not working with children, loads of people you could go have a cup of tea with (12) - hasn't found cliques (18)
	Social activities	- process of making friends is gradual, join club or go to mess, get chatting to people, family days when children younger (1) - coffee mornings were very focused on babies and not interesting (3) - horrific going to coffee mornings, talking about banal things (3) - harder to meet people this posting as people go home at weekends and she works so cannot go to coffee mornings and doesn't have a small child (4) - some people are trying to create social events as it is key to "mix" with your husband's unit (4) - overseas everyone was in it together as couldn't go visit family or friends easily, people socialised more (4) - more socialising overseas, great group of friends with similar aged children who got on very well and did a lot together, brilliant, great network (4) - went to coffee morning once, found it awkward, didn't go again (5) - in UK SPs don't want to do things together or with children, everyone keeps to themselves, no bad thing (5) - lots of events so you aren't isolated, see people all the time (8) - lucky that she worked, got to know people through work (7) - didn't go to coffee mornings, not her thing, not confident enough (7) - a lot of informal social activities held overseas, BBQs (7) - a lot of events going on to meet people, groups a good way to make friends (8) - coffee mornings are be difficult environments, not for her, though has gone when she has needed to talk to someone (9) - part of military choir (10) - meets up with other SPs, not Army thing (10) - officers mess provided social network when overseas, met people and socialised (12) - not going to church cuts down on meeting people (16) - learning to meet people socially rather than through work (16)

		- wives club gets you meeting people and can drop it if it's not for you (16) - didn't have job after moving to last posting, thought she would go to coffee mornings or mother and tots groups in barracks because they have similar experiences to her (17) - had bad experience when first son was very small at coffee group where no-one spoke to her, stuck with her (17) - might have ignored her because they were younger, didn't realise what they were doing in excluding her, had own friends, didn't feel they needed to talk to her (17) - doesn't think SPs know impact of not talking to new people, secure in friends they have, don't need to talk to new person, don't realise you need to reach out (17) - social events can be filled with cliques of other SPs (17) - lots of events and functions to meet people at and all in the same boat so people are friendly (18) - had women's group in one base which ran regular activities but didn't continue once the person running it left (19)
	Regiment	- had to carve out support from SPs, didn't move as unit, had to go introduce herself to others and find friends (2) - husband worked for small unit so close-knit, end up seeing people you knew on posting because small area to work in, everyone knows everyone (6) - moved as part of regiment, all together, so you knew people you were moving with either into SFA or nearby, may not be living near you in garrison but still around (11) - didn't move as regiment, different unit each time, maybe different if regimental moves, build up longer-lasting relationships (12) - husband not in regiment, don't have ready-made network when move, don't know people, both good and bad (18) - not in regiment so social aspect not there, could be completely on your own, could be difficult if you are a quiet person (18) - in regiment, social aspect is set up for you, just have to get to know people (18)
	Rank	- still division between ranks of SPs mixing, doesn't happen often (2) - military friends are of a similar rank but thinks this is because of where they live (10) - in other social activities rank seems to be less of an issue, get on well in choir (10) - could go out more than other ranks as had more money (12) - mingled with SPs no matter what rank their husbands, were people to her (14) - met other ranks in children's groups, not the same obsession with rank with lower rank SPs (14)

		- core group of SPs, mainly officer SPs, social butterflies organised all events and activities (14) - not a problem to her to be friends with SPs of lower ranked personnel, similar age (15) - senior ranks tend to mix together more, common for officers not to mix with other ranks, sad because they are all people and wives (17) - division is highlighted in military society over civilian because you have to try and find people to be friends with, notice things, differences (17) - wouldn't tell SPs husband's rank, would surprise them (18)
Social support	**Support**	- had good friends out in Europe who helped out when she had medical issue and son was ill at the same time husband away training, lucky to have them (4) - tend to talk to other women you meet when children small and they could see if you were upset, get support this way (5) - had a close-knit community on one posting who helped out when she was in hospital, knew had support her if she needed it, everyone helpful, fantastic, a moment in time in terms of the people who were there and how they mixed (6) - SPs overseas in the same situation (7) - everyone in same situation on patch (8) - got good support from other SPs (8) - very positive to have relationships with other SPs, always someone to moan to, in the same boat (8) - build friendships quite quickly, lend a hand when needed because people have no one else to turn to (8) - helpful to have someone step in to help out when needed which family would normally do (8) - people were approachable and helpful, especially if children were a similar age as they could help out with picking kids up from school (8) - some postings have been very easy, haven't needed to much support, everything works out easily, others harder (9) - SPs provided good practical advice on things like banking, recycling etc., rely on other SPs rather than military to give this information (10) - supported by other SPs when accompanied but on your own when you are at home (11) - social networks there for those who need it but she didn't (12) - develop good networks for supporting one another because you live so far away from family, relied on SPs overseas (12)

		- helped out especially during deployments with shopping for those without cars, dog sitting, little things that make a difference when you don't have family to rely on (13) - not keen on asking for help as would have got it but would have wanted to know people before leaving her kids with them (14) - support from SPs there if you want it or want to talk about things (15) - support from community there but have to be willing to put yourself out there to get it (16)
	Lack of support	- moved after recently giving birth, didn't know anyone in new area and husband deployed, Army tries to build networks and structure for SPs but not always possible if have to move (2) - no support from anyone in military at time of being CO's wife (2) - relies on old friends (military and ex-military) from previous posting for support if needed rather than military SPs on current posting (5) - good support from other SPs in other postings but not in current location (5)
	Understand-ing	- military people get what you are going through, completely understand stresses, why you might be feeling down (1) - not all SPs might understand why you would send child to boarding school but at least they might have an idea (1) - expects some support from SPs, all in the same boat, especially if husband deployed (5) - everyone in the same boat overseas, everyone knows each other (5) - everyone is in the same situation on patch, knows what it's like to have husband away all the time (8) - SPs were approachable, all in the same boat, different community spirit to civilians (13) - bases can be quite claustrophobic but people are quick to come and introduce themselves and get to know you because you are all in the same boat (14) - doesn't doubt for a second that would have had support from other SPs if she had been stuck, would have rallied around, all in the same boat (14) - integrated more into the Army community for first time, normally stays more civilian (17) - similar emotions to other SPs, going through similar things, upside of military life, downside is that friends can leave, friend moving soon (17)

Table 51: S/P experiences of social networks with non-military friends, colleagues and civilians during accompanied postings

Categories	Dimensions	Elements
Social networks	**Meeting people**	- doesn't have military friends in current location, only a few military houses (1) - makes friends through work and child's sporting activities (1) - lucky that has met some local mothers, a blessing (1) - hasn't got to know local mothers as son doesn't go to local school and she drives him there rather than walks in with other mothers (1) - has colleagues who are now friends (2) - managed to make new friends wherever she has moved to (2) - friends are people she has met either before Army, through her interests or work (2) - some of her colleagues are good friends (6) - didn't go out beyond taking children to school and looking for work (7) - on one posting all friends were through local school, not the same type of relationship but still friendly (8) - starting to build relationships through church, deeper relationships compared to SPs (10) - one move was in the same area so had same group of friends (10) - has friends from pre-marriage, when married and children born (10) - knew a lot of people off camp through work and hobbies and previous friends who were still in area (14) - socialised more with these friends as more on her wavelength, same interested (14) - has social life through work (19) - knows two other local mothers to say hello to but don't know who is military or not in area (9) (5.7) - told that parents at child's school wouldn't talk to her and this was correct though slowly changing (9) (5.7) - not sure if it's the area or parents aren't used to military (9) (5.7) - not negative to her, not a clash between communities (9) (5.7) - parents in playground ignored her for a very long time (9) (5.7) - civilian neighbours didn't interact with her, one man said hello but that's it (9) (5.7) - tried to meet people at school gates (10) (5.7)

		- took time for school mothers to come around but did (10) (5.7) - child starting school made her part of a group of mothers, shared experiences and built bonds, networks with others (10) (5.7) - taught herself local language by talking to locals (16) (5.7)
	Maintaining friendships	- has kept old friends, have to make effort to go see them, none military (2) - a lot of friends choose to move away from area when she did (2) - has old school friends who were always a constant presence (3) - can go a long time without seeing good friends (6) - makes effort to see friends when go back to area they own house in (10) - has friends she is in contact with regularly by phone or email, would meet up with (10) - most friends not military, these were who she stayed in touch with (10) - positive move on one posting back among friends in area they come from (10) - sees school friends regularly (12) - has strong group of school friends she is still friends with (15) - managed to keep up with school and college friends long distance, maybe visit once a year (18) - one posting near where she went to university so able to see more of these friends but friends in previous location less often (19) - couldn't see work friends in previous location as often (19) - still has civilian friends she is in contact with (19)
	Size of social circle	- doesn't need a lot of friends, happy with small but close group that she has, huge number of acquaintances not for her (2) - had great life in military but at expense of friendships (12) - in contact with lots of people through social media, people from school but hasn't seen them for many years (17) - has small circle of friends because of moves (17) - would like good quality friendships but they take time to build up and she moves a lot (17) - don't have close friends they might holiday with or have traditions with (18) - have each other and family (18) - don't have friends they see regularly, Army and Civvy friends spread around (18)
	Leaving friends	- had school friends around her all the time (1) - left posting where knew people, moved to new area, wasn't familiar, didn't know people (7)

		- end up leaving friends behind, civilian friends aren't as understanding (17)
Social support, connections	**Support**	- friends from home provide support for personal issues (1) - non-military friends supported her during post-birth move (2) - friends aren't geographically close but provide support (2) - had two small children and husband away a lot, no support at this time (3) - support from non-military friends depends on where they are based, if husband away a lot and what his job is (8) - didn't need to rely on civilian friends as much as parents were nearby (8) - teachers good at helping children settle (9) (5.7) - when have children need to know you have someone down the road that can help out (10) (5.7) - involved in church soon after miscarriage, provided support (10) - level of support depends, some areas have close group of friends, other areas she relied on old friends she had met in previous places for support (10) - friend came and helped her move as husband working (14) - because they needed to sign into base, friends couldn't just swing by but easy enough to do (14) - support from women with children in the same class as her child during medical event (1) - only difficult when she was in hospital and needed someone to walk dogs but neighbours signed parents in (14) - difficult, awkward getting parents signed into her house behind the wire when child ill (14)
	Understanding	- civilians not as understanding about military life, pros and cons (1) (5.7) - civilians not as understanding as SPs about sending child to boarding school (1) (5.7) - other mothers judged them as posh because of how they spoke (3) (5.7) - GP she visited for depression didn't understand that she had no support during depression, glib answers, didn't understand her situation (3) (5.7) - has good friends at work, including one S/P who understands military life (4) - can't understand lifestyle, husband being away for 6 months (8) (5.7) - different living among civilians, they don't understand what it's like to be married to soldier (8) (5.7) - people don't understand military life, think you live unaccompanied, no idea unless you have family in Service (8) (5.7)

		- colleagues wouldn't understand what it was like having husband away (11) (5.7) - end up leaving friends behind, civilian friends aren't as understanding (17)

Table 52: S/P experiences of social networks during transition

Categories	Dimensions	Elements
Meeting people	**Making friends**	- children were older when left so harder to meet people through this route (3) - has tried to make friends, has found some but much younger, not with grown-ups (3) - met one ex-SP but not a close friend although sees her everyday (3) - can't explain lack of friends, always got along with people but definitely there, don't have that bond (3) - came late to boarding school so doesn't know parents there as well and doesn't see those who pick up regularly (3) - can't seem to find likeminded people, people already have their circle of friends (3) - would like to move nearer friends although they can only do so much, can't sort life out for you (3) - most difficult thing is to meet people again, not knowing people (7)
	Civilians	- cultural differences from SPs, not sure if humour or independence is different but hasn't found similar since leaving (3) - humour is different between military and civilians, look at things more light-heartedly in military (7) - knows people now but misses comradery of military life (7) - civilians are slower to approach you than SPs (13) - people in village aren't as open as in military, can look at you with suspicion, especially in smaller villages (14) - people are lovely but reluctant to be open with you (14)
	Social networks	- lack of solid friendships due to moves may have repercussions for the future (12) - bought home in husband's last posting but not sure where to retire to as don't have social networks in current area (12) - compares herself to sibling who has had similar life but hasn't moved as much, has a great network of friends, wouldn't leave area (12) - lives in work during term time, doesn't know neighbours, people in village in area house is in(12) - has close friends but they aren't nearby, dispersed throughout the country (12) - more involved in community where work is (12) - has social network through work, not through military (12) - has group of friends who are as supportive as family are (14) - moved back into area she knew, parents nearby but didn't know anyone, hadn't lived there for many years (14)

Table 53: Influences of S/P experiences of social networks during accompanied postings on well-being

Themes	Sub-themes	Dimensions
No problems	<u>No problems</u> - common for friends to move away, harder but not an issue for her (2) (5.3) - close friends have moved away, not sad about most recent friend to move as leaving soon herself, happy for her that she is gone (6) (5.4) - she is longer same time point in her life as SPs with young children so can't be a part of it, at different point, that's fine (10) (5.4) - didn't bother her friendships were superficial, always had shoulder to cry on and had husband (12) (5.4)	Social – maintain (5.3) Military – patch (5.4) Social – time (5.4) Social – depth (5.4)
Identity	<u>Mother & women</u> - civilians judge her as "worse mother ever" for sending children to boarding school (1) (5.7) - judged by other SPs for sending child to nursery (3) (5.4) - told by one S/P she wasn't feminine enough, trouble with smaller patches (3) (5.4) <u>Assuming rank</u> - loathed playground because of other mothers, felt weighed up, judged (3) (5.7) - other civilian parents judged them as posh because of husband's rank and how they spoke, though not like that (3) (5.7) - artificial world created where other SPs are very nice to the CO's wife and want to be your friend because of who husband is and the power he has over staff (2) (5.4) - first posting very lonely, people weren't friendly, more interested in husband's rank rather than you as a person even though it doesn't matter (5) (5.4) - wary of other SPs in case they "aren't the right people" and because of surface friendliness and too much focus on husbands and their jobs (6) (5.4) - element of hierarchy within group based on husband's rank she didn't think was relevant or appropriate, involved just because of where on camp she was (14) (5.4) - knew people on camp but didn't want to get sucked	Social - understand (5.7) Military – patch (5.4) Military – patch (5.4) Social - understanding (5.7) Military – rank (5.4) Military – patch (5.4) Military – patch (5.4) Military – rank (5.4)

	into clique-ness around what your husband did or his rank (14) (5.4) - camp could be cliquey, didn't like, too much attention on husband's rank and job (14) (5.4) - doesn't like cliquey-ness of camp, one of the things she doesn't like about camp life (14) (5.4) - some SPs wouldn't be friends with her because of husband's rank, wouldn't be able to talk freely in case it got them in trouble (15) (5.4) - not invited to some social events as a couple because of husband's rank, wouldn't want him there if socialising, ok if just wives (15) (5.4) - feels has to be on best behaviour with SPs of similarly ranked personnel, the young crazy one (15) (5.4) - difficult to make friends because of what husband's job is, rank (18) (5.4) - naïve in the beginning and now distrustful and wary of other SPs, want to be friends just because who husband is, how he can help their own husband (15) (5.4)	Military – rank (5.4) Military – rank (5.4) Military – rank (5.4)
Self-worth	<u>Self-esteem, confidence</u> - making friends difficult, naturally shy, learnt that she wears a mask for approaching new situations, a mask over her shyness, because if she didn't she wouldn't be able to meet anyone new (17) (5.4) - can't live a life if you are always moving, have to break down barriers you put around yourself, have to put yourself out there and be vulnerable otherwise you will never meet new people (17) (5.4) - puts on façade, not confident person, only when people get to know her better than realise she doesn't have confident persona that she puts on in new social environments, hates having to do it (17) (5.4) - really difficult to talk to strangers who know each other, hates it (17) (5.4) - have to be confident because it can be daunting at social events (18) (5.4)	Internal – personality (5.4) Internal – personality (5.4)

Connect-edness	Support and belonging	
	Support	
	- SPs know what it's like having husband away a lot, brings you closer (8) (5.4)	Support – support (5.4)
	- other SPs support you when husband away because they knew what it was like and how you were feeling, look after each other (11) (5.4)	Support – support (5.4)
	- fantastic support from other SPs, strengths of patch life, source of fun to have other mothers around (3) (5.4) - able to get out of the house and spend time with someone else rather than being on your own, always found someone to get along with, though could be "bitchy" or "difficult" SPs (3) (5.4)	Military – patch (5.4)
	- met really nice people on first posting, if she hadn't had them it would have not been a nice experience, very rural, away from friends and family (6) (5.4)	Military – patch (5.4)
	- friends tell you their experiences and you aren't alone anymore, made her sane again (3) (5.4) - felt better after talking to friends, they told her to go see doctor about depression (3) (5.4)	Social – meeting (5.4)
	- doesn't enjoy making superficial friends after moves, need to to survive, especially if not working (9) (5.4)	Social – depth (5.4)
	- comes a point when you don't want to have same types of conversations anymore at coffee mornings, what does husband do, where have you come from (9) (5.4) - sounds awful but need to do it, need network to get your through (9) (5.4) - understands conversations are how you make links within the community, need them to survive, need networks (9) (5.4) - making friends has got harder as got older, bit tired of having to do it and make chitchat and met new people because you need to do it to survive (9) (5.4) - exhausting, especially when she is only going to be somewhere for a short amount of time (9) (5.4)	Military – social (5.4)
	- support from military SPs in the present, once you move on you just have to get on with it (10) (5.4)	Support – support (5.4)
	- distance from other SPs makes her feel like she doesn't fit in, although she is a grown-up, needs to accept what the situation is and recognise that it's ok, if that's level of friendship offered, that's fine, still willing to offer support (10) (5.4)	Social – meeting (5.4)
	- company important especially when husband away, fill your time with friends and neighbours, otherwise be on	Social – support (5.4)

	own a lot (12) (5.4) - gets 'nerves' about meeting new people (16) (5.4) - make the best of it but takes a while to trust people (16) (5.4) - bit of doubt when first has to meet people, wonders if she has to meet people (16) (5.4) - has to force herself to take part as doesn't work or have children so has to force herself, limiting yourself if you are not prepared to put yourself out there, especially overseas (16) (5.4) - if don't force yourself, get off your butt, could be very miserable 3 years, can cause problems at home, will take it out on husband, children or drink (16) (5.4) - has to force herself to go to coffee mornings or wives club events, but don't want to decline invitations or be negative as that's your lifeline (16) (5.4)	Internal – personality (5.4)
	- benefit of life is that they know everyone in their street, nice (19) (5.4)	Social – time (5.4)
	- during difficult personal time, helpful to know there were people around who support you and cared for you (10) (5.3)	Support - support (5.3)
	- always had core group of friends in each location providing support, keep you going, encourage you (10) (5.3)	Support - support (5.3)
	- has supportive colleagues who she gets on well with, understand when she might be stressed (4) (5.3)	Support- understand (5.3)
	- hard that colleagues didn't understand what it was like with husband being away (11) (5.7)	Social - understanding (5.7)
	Reluctance to seek help - don't want to ask others for help, feel bad asking, guilty, don't like to take advantage of people's kindness, some will, mostly don't want to be (8) (5.4)	Support – support (5.4)
	- independent, private person, unlikely to seek support from other people, try to work things out herself or with husband, usually frustrations with not being able to do something, missing friends or family being ill and not able to be there (12) (5.4)	Support – support (5.4)
	- didn't like the idea of being indebted to someone that she might not be able to help out in return (14) (5.4)	Support – support (5.4)
	- didn't like to ask for support because Army about manning up, doesn't like to appear to be weak (15) (5.4) - could be her character to want to appear strong, doesn't want people to think she is weak or struggling (15) (5.4) - would fall apart if you were a weak person (15) (5.4)	Support – support (5.4)

	Belonging - hard to leave friends as rely on them, they are your family, help each other out, spend a lot of time with them and go through a lot together (1) (5.4) - some friends become like family (1) (5.4) - hard when she moved home as felt had left a family behind, family but in a different way even though miles from home (11) (5.4) - very positive thing to move as regiment, know people, they understand (11) (5.4) - if moving into regiment, have people to look out for you, easier in a way, have ready-made community you have a part in it, whether you want it or not, because of "who you are", a place for you (18) (5.4) - care packages reminded them that despite being in a new place where they didn't know anyone, they weren't on their own (10) (5.3) - friendships that pick up where you left off have a security in them that is hard to let go of, feel accepted, know your place, nice to be needed (10) (5.3) - friendships like this give you a sense that you fit in somewhere, not sure if that will happen in the next place you move to (10) (5.3) - particularly difficult to leave friendship built about life events such as marriage, birth of children, can't imagine being anywhere else at the time (10) (5.3) - makes her feel sad that she doesn't get to meet up with friends, doesn't have a huge impact (17) (5.3) - doesn't necessarily want to be part of group, just wants good quality friendships (17) (5.3)	Social – meeting (5.4) Support – support (5.4) Support – support (5.4) Military – regiment (5.4) Support - support (5.3) Social – size (5.3)
	<u>Grief, loss</u> - move from one location quite traumatic, been there a long time (10) (5.3) - has to go through process of grieving for what she is losing before she can move onto next step (10) (5.3) - needs to acknowledge that move will be painful and hurt but that there will be new opportunities (10) (5.3) - grief of letting go, being sad that won't see people regularly, won't be sharing their lives, not helping them out, realise that relationships will be on a different level, not as involved (10) (5.3) - hard to leave this network of friends and start again in new location (10) (5.3) - has to physically leave a place before she can realise that it will be different but not necessarily bad (10) (5.3)	Support – support (5.3)

	- quite traumatic and upsetting to leave places you have been for a while and have made friends (14) (5.4) - leaving memories behind and moving somewhere where you may not know anyone (14) (5.4) - like your job to say goodbye to people you've made friends with, not sure when you will meet again, life is busy (1) (5.4)	Social – meeting (5.4) Social – meeting (5.4)
	<u>Isolation, loneliness</u> - 1st year of having new baby was in new area with no husband, very difficult time, a lot to do w husband being away but also being new mum w/out social structures (2) (5.4) - in completely new environment, everything is new and new mother, very vulnerable at this time (2) (5.4) - support from health visitor but no one else was looking out for her, could be because she was an officer's wife, could be more support for soldier's wives, may need to carve it out (2) (5.4) -wanted it to be different, to be in a position where you are in a familiar environment with a social network and where you feel supported (2) (5.4) - very lonely when husband travelling a lot and children small and no support (3) (5.3) - feels a bit alone as doesn't know who she would count on if something bad happened, feels alone a lot of the time, just have to get on with it, do manage (6) (5.3) - if didn't work would go mad, her saviour (6) (5.3) - lonely to move from a place where you are settled to somewhere where you don't know anyone (7) (5.3) - social side more difficult to manage after moves, sometimes a very lonely life (7) (5.3) - being stressed put her in a low mood, not bad enough to go see a doctor (7) (5.3) - difficult move back from N America in particular, don't realise at the time how bad things are, family commented on how she seemed stressed, felt down at the time (7) (5.3) - had great time in N America, lots of opportunities but lonely life (7) (5.3) - had no one else to rely on apart from parents when son was sick apart from neighbour, difficult to deal with when child ill (14) (5.3) - get weary of having to go find support especially when have to do it while husband is at war, SPs could be doubly isolated if move coincides with deployment (2) (5.4) - sad coming back to UK as doesn't have friends anymore, couple of friends from previously postings but not the same (5) (5.4) - sad she hasn't made more friends but happy in own company and with few friends she has (5)	Support – lack (5.4) Support – support (5.3) Social – maintain (5.3) Social – meeting (5.3) Support – support (5.3) Military – regiment (5.4) Military – social (5.4)

	(5.4) - if didn't make the effort you wouldn't have had anyone, be very lonely (7) (5.4) - a lot of people very lonely, would come see you for support (7) (5.4) - very lonely life, would feel lonely when dropped children off at school and not working, wondered how would she fill her day, all on her own (7) (5.4)	Military – patch (5.4)
	<u>Disconnected from community, friends</u> - move to Europe away from friends she has grown up with and had around her all the time was hard (1) (5.3) - only had couple of real friends who have now left, hasn't got anyone who is true friend, only one or two close friends (6) (5.4) - like an island in more ways than one, life is one hold overseas (6) (5.4) - has school friends she sees regularly but misses out on spending time with them (12) (5.3) - felt missed out on special occasions and day-today life with school friends, jealous, couldn't afford to always go home so had to turn down invites (15) (5.3) - feel out of sight, out of mind, thought of them more than they thought of her, civilians aren't the ones away so different for them (15) (5.3) - felt left out, jealous that they were able to do things together they had always done (15) (5.3) - had good friends in the Army but not the same as friends you've had all your life (15) (5.3) - feels they missed out on having friends, downside of military life (18) (5.3) - attitudes of other parents changing but very slowly, difficult (9) (5.7) - not great fun that she doesn't know anyone locally (9) (5.7) - hard to get to know people when school mothers all knew each other from NTC or nursery (10) (5.7) - harder to meet people as got older and in last posting as many civilian, harder to break into static community (10) (5.7) - feels isolated from the community in current location, miss out on a lot in community if you work and don't have a small child or just at home (4) (5.4) - nature of her job isolates her, sticky situation, can't get away from it, just the way it is, comes with the territory (4) (5.4) - coffee mornings felt awkward, weren't unfriendly, people tend to stay within cliques and with their own friends (5) (5.4) - strange inter-service attitude in first posting, not bothered making friends with SPs of other services as "not one	Support – support (5.3) Military – patch (5.4) Social – maintain (5.3) Social – maintain (5.3) Social – maintain (5.3) Social – size (5.3) Friends- meeting (5.7) Friends- meeting (5.7) Military – social (5.4) Military – social (5.4) Military – patch (5.4)

	of us" (6) (5.4) - felt very vulnerable walking kids to school in new location, didn't know anyone, not bold, confident enough to introduce self, people looking at you because you're new (7) (5.4) - someone would talk to you eventually, get used to it (7) (5.4) - didn't make friends on patch with other mothers as kids went to different school, puts you out of step with rest of community, changes the dynamic (9) (5.4) - back in UK, a lot of SPs worked, found this isolating as she didn't work (12) (5.4) - being ignored at coffee group might be because they were younger, didn't realise what they were doing in excluding her, had own friends, didn't feel they needed to talk to her (17) (5.4) - doesn't think SPs know impact of not talking to new people, secure in friends they have, don't need to talk to new person, don't realise you need to reach out (17) (5.4) - always made conscious effort to do talk to new people when she went to coffee mornings, knew how hard to was to walk into a room where everyone knows each other (17) (5.4) - has been terrified by going to coffee mornings, not knowing how you would be received (17) (5.4) - cliques can make others feel excluded (17) (5.4) - difficult to break into outer shell of established wives in new area (17) (5.4) (5.4) but doesn't want to be living in those cliques (17) (5.4) - fine making friends though harder when you don't have children (19) (5.4) - hard on first posting, didn't have children and everyone else did, was working so never saw anyone, never had conversation that was relevant, felt quite excluded (19) (5.4) - all changed when she had children and knew everyone through groups, school gates (19) (5.4) - first posting wasn't a very sociable place, left everything behind, only had social life through work and husband's unit who made effort to include them (19) (5.4) *Self-exclusion* - because of hierarchy socialised more off camp and with only some SPs on camp (14) (5.4) - could have made more effort to get involved in social groups on camp but made conscious decision not to get too involved (14) (5.4) - self-exclusion affected how others saw her but didn't give it much thought (14) (5.4) - made decision to	Internal – personality (5.4) Social – meeting (5.4) Social – patch life (5.4) Military – social (5.4) Social – time (5.4) Military – rank (5.4)

	step back from friendship, too easy to get "sucked into" [obsession with rank] not what she wanted, just wanted someone to talked to (14) (5.4) - kept herself to herself and declined social offers (14) (5.4) - people talk about each other's lives, didn't want that level of intrusion (14) (5.4) - a lot of people are very bitchy, survives it because she works, not involved in social activities, not the sort (6) (5.4) - some SPs have nothing better to do, can make for nasty environment that she doesn't like (16) (5.4) - nothing stopping her from knocking on doors and seeking out other SPs and would if younger and less cynical, not so burnt out (9) (5.4) - done it before but feels tired of doing it and past the point of needing to (9) (5.4) - making friends become repetitive as she has got older, can't be bothered now (15) (5.4)	Social – meeting (5.4) Military – patch (5.4) Internal – personality (5.4) Social – time (5.4) Social – meeting (5.4)